

# About Our Flag...



**Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, USA**  
Grand Lodge Headquarters  
2750 N. Lakeview Avenue, Chicago, IL 60614-1889



# About Our Flag...

A comprehensive guide  
of history and facts about  
our United States flag...



Americanism Committee  
Grand Lodge  
Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks  
United States of America

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# Did You Know?

*Grand Exalted Ruler Henry A. Melvin, in his report to the Grand Lodge in 1907, recommended the observance of Flag Day by the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks.*

*red, white and blue...*

*The Grand Lodge adopted his suggestion at this meeting and urged all local Lodges to take part in ceremonies honoring our flag and its history.*



The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks was the first fraternal organization to observe Flag Day. The President of the United States is authorized and requested to issue annually a proclamation calling upon officials of the Government to display the flag of the United States on all Government buildings on such day, and urging the people to observe the day as the anniversary of the adoption on June 14, 1777, by the Continental Congress of the Stars and Stripes as the official flag of the United States of America.

The importance of every single U.S. flag, and how it is displayed is keenly observed by the Elks. We celebrate over 94 years of the Grand Lodge's 1907 designation of June 14 as Flag Day, which was followed in 1911 with the Order's approval for mandatory observance by all Lodges.

We hope that as you acknowledge the great love for your country by displaying our flag, you may reference the information in this guide, and maybe learn more about its history.



# About Our Flag:



**OUR FLAG...**  
is a piece of cloth flown  
from a staff or halyard.

**OUR FLAG...**  
is the symbol that stands for a  
nation's basic ideas and purposes.

**OUR FLAG...**  
is our national emblem.  
Every country in the world  
has a flag.

**OUR FLAG...**  
represents the union of 50 states  
and millions of people joined into  
one great country.

**OUR FLAG...**  
stands for our people...millions of  
Americans who have worked and  
fought to preserve our freedom  
and way of life.

THE UNITED STATES  
OF AMERICA



*stars and stripes forever...*

# When To Display Our Flag:

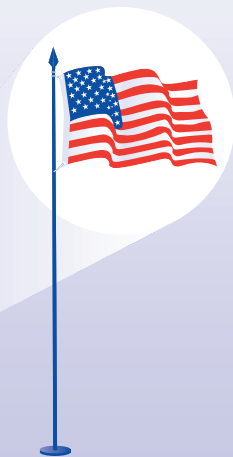


## DURING THE DAY...

- From sunrise to sunset on buildings and stationary poles outside.
- Any day when the weather is good, unless an all-weather flag is used.

## AT NIGHT...

- The flag is usually lowered at night.
- If a patriotic effect is desired, the flag may be displayed 24 hours a day, only if properly illuminated during darkness.



## HOLIDAYS...

### AND OTHER SPECIAL DAYS TO DISPLAY OUR FLAG:

New Year's Day - January 1

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day  
3rd Monday in January

Inauguration Day - January 20

President's Day - 3rd Monday in February

Easter Sunday

Mother's Day

Armed Forces Day

Memorial Day  
(half staff until noon)

Flag Day June 14

Independence Day - July 4

Labor Day

Patriot Day - September 11

Constitution Day - September 17

Columbus Day

Veterans Day

Thanksgiving Day

Christmas Day - December 25

State Holidays

Admission Day of State

## Did You Know?

What do the colors in the flag stand for?

White:  
signifies purity and innocence.

Red: signifies hardiness and valor.

Blue: vigilance, perseverance and justice.

# How To Display Our Flag:

## Did You Know?

Always RAISE the flag on staff briskly.  
Always LOWER the flag slowly and respectfully.

## RAISING OUR FLAG...

**MEMORIAL DAY:** Fly flag at half-staff until noon; then raise to full-staff until sunset.

**AS A SIGN OF MOURNING:** First raise flag to full-staff, then lower to half-staff.

## LOWERING OUR FLAG...

Don't let the flag touch the ground. Fold as it comes down and before completely detaching it from halyard.

From half-staff, flag should be raised to the peak before lowering.

## CARE OF OUR FLAG...



**FOLDING** Fold flag in fourths lengthwise. Then make successive diagonal folds, ending with union outside.

**DISPOSAL** To destroy an old flag the approved way, by burning the flag. This is the most dignified and preferred way.

**WEATHER** Unless using an all weather flag, do not expose our flag to bad weather.

### IN PROCESSION WITH OTHER FLAGS

U.S. flag to marchers' right (observer's left).

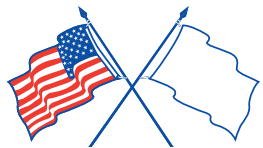


### IN PROCESSION WITH OTHER FLAGS

U.S. flag at front and center of line.

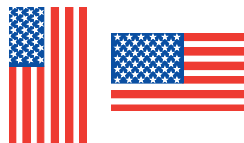


### CROSSED ON WALL



U.S. flag outside, on observer's left.

### FLAT ON WALL



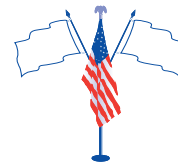
Union always on top, to observer's left.

### ON SAME STAFF AS OTHER FLAGS



U.S. flag at peak, above any other flags.

### GROUPED



U.S. flag in center, or at highest point.

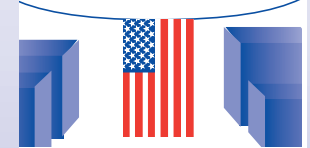
### GROUPED

U.S. flag goes to its own right, is hoisted first. Flags of different nations flown at same height.



### OVER A STREET

Flag vertical; union faces north on east-west streets, or east on north-south streets.



### ON SPEAKERS PLATFORM

Flag above and behind speaker or on STAFF to his right.



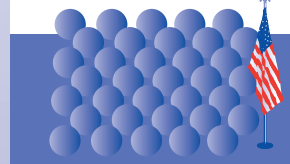
### IN CHURCH

When displayed from a staff in a church or auditorium, should be placed to right of clergyman or speaker as he faces the congregation.



### IN AUDIENCE

In front of audience and to speaker's right when facing audience.



### FUNERAL DISPLAY

May cover a casket but not a statue. Bunting may be used for decoration. Flag must be removed before placing into grave.

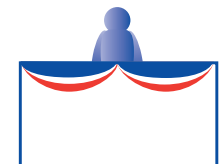


### MILITARY FUNERAL

For member of Armed Forces or of recognized military organizations. Flag draped lengthwise, union over deceased's left shoulder. Casket carried foot first. Don't lower flag into grave or let it touch ground.

### AS DECORATION

Use bunting, never the flag. (Blue on top, then white, then red.)



# How To Pledge Allegiance To Our Flag:

## Did You Know?

The pledge was first published in 1892. It was reworded in 1923, and 1954. We use the 1954 version today.

### PREPARATION...

#### Head Bare

Women leave hats on.

People in uniform leave hats on, give hand salute.

#### Right Hand Over Heart Standing At Attention

*"I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."*

*"...conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."*



## Flag Facts:

**1905 TRADEMARK ACT**  
Forbids the use of the flag in any registered trademark.

**1942 CODE OF FLAG DISPLAY AND USE**  
Brought together existing rules and customs for flag use and display (amended in 1976)

**1949 NATIONAL FLAG DAY BILL**  
Officially designated June 14th as Flag Day. This bill was signed by President Harry S. Truman, who was an Elk.

**1953 UNITED NATIONS ACT**  
Permits the U.N. flag to be displayed above the U.S. and other national flags at U.N. headquarters.

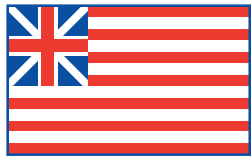
# How Our Flag Was Born:

## PRE-REVOLUTION

The colonies had many local flags, one of the most famous was the "RATTLESNAKE FLAG," with the slogan "Don't tread on me," as a warning to the British.

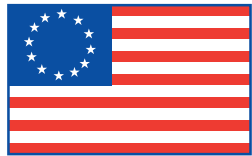
**1775**

The "PINE TREE BANNER" FLAG was used on America's first fleet of warships which engaged the British in battle Nov. - Dec. 1775.



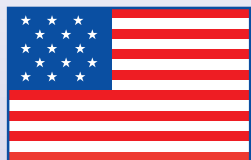
**1775-1776**

The "CONGRESS COLOR", or "GRAND UNION" FLAG, had 13 alternating red and white stripes which represented the 13 original colonies. The flag was used in early battles with the British.



**1777**

FIRST AUTHORIZED AMERICAN FLAG, established by Congressional Resolution on June 14; we celebrate FLAG DAY on that date.



**1794**

The SECOND CONGRESSIONAL FLAG Act added 2 stars and stripes to represent admission of Vermont and Kentucky to the Union.



**1818**

PRESENT FLAG established by Congress, from then on, stripes would stay at original 13, but a new star would be added for each state that joined the Union added on July 4 following admission. Note: only 20 stars in 1818.

## STATE BY STATE...

★ **1777: 13 Stars**

Delaware  
Pennsylvania  
New Jersey  
Georgia  
Connecticut  
Massachusetts  
Maryland  
South Carolina  
New Hampshire  
Virginia  
New York  
North Carolina  
Rhode Island

★ **1795: 15 Stars**

Vermont  
Kentucky

★ **1818: 20 Stars**

Tennessee  
Ohio  
Louisiana  
Indiana  
Mississippi

★ **1819: 21 Stars**

Illinois

★ **1820: 23 Stars**

Alabama  
Maine

★ **1822: 24 Stars**

Missouri

★ **1836: 25 Stars**

Arkansas

★ **1837: 26 Stars**

Michigan

★ **1845: 27 Stars**

Florida

★ **1846: 28 Stars**

Texas

★ **1847: 29 Stars**

Iowa

★ **1848: 30 Stars**  
Wisconsin

★ **1851: 31 Stars**  
California

★ **1858: 32 Stars**  
Minnesota

★ **1859: 33 Stars**  
Oregon

★ **1861: 34 Stars**  
Kansas

★ **1863: 35 Stars**  
West Virginia

★ **1865: 36 Stars**  
Nevada

★ **1867: 37 Stars**  
Nebraska

★ **1877: 38 Stars**  
Colorado

★ **1890: 43 Stars**  
North Dakota  
South Dakota

Montana  
Washington  
Idaho

★ **1891: 44 Stars**  
Wyoming

★ **1896: 45 Stars**  
Utah

★ **1908: 46 Stars**  
Oklahoma

★ **1912: 48 Stars**  
New Mexico  
Arizona

★ **1959: 49 Stars**  
Alaska

★ **1960: 50 Stars**  
Hawaii



# Official Specifications Of Our Flag:

PER EXECUTIVE ORDER  
AUGUST 21, 1959

