

FLAG ETIQUETTE

Ideally, an American flag on your house should hang from a staff that angles out from the front wall, a windowsill, or balcony. It's a good idea to screw a bracket made for holding a flagstaff to the trim. Fasten it securely so it won't become soiled or damaged. Do not allow the flag to touch the ground, floor, water, or anything else beneath it. It's also appropriate to hang the flag from a horizontal staff.

Whether the flag hangs from an angled or horizontal staff, be sure the union or canton (the rectangle with the stars) is at the peak. (Hanging the flag with the union down signals extreme distress.) When our President declares the flag to be flown at half-staff, it is acceptable to hang the flag from a horizontal staff with the union down, though your neighbors may not understand why you're doing this.

When the flag is displayed either horizontally or vertically against a wall, the union should be at the top and to your left. When displayed in a window, the flag should be hung so that the union is on the left when you see it from the street.

The American flag is meant to be a flag; don't use it for any other purpose. For example, don't use it as drapery, ceiling decoration, or as a bed spread. And never use it as a receptacle for carrying or holding anything.

Though it is customary to fly the flag from sunrise to sunset, the U.S. Code says that "when a patriotic effect is desired," you can display it around the clock. If you do, you should illuminate it with a light.

When displayed from a car, the flagstaff should be fixed or clamped firmly to the vehicle, ideally on the right side. The flag should not be draped over the hood, top, sides, or back. The same holds true for a flag displayed on a float in a parade. Don't carry the flag flat or horizontally. And, because it is not meant to be apparel, do not wear a United States flag. If you wear a lapel flag, pin it on the left side, near your heart.

Appropriate USA flag folding procedure: Basically, fold the flag in half width-wise twice. Fold up a triangle, starting at the striped end ... and repeat ... until only the end of the union is exposed. Then fold down the square into a triangle and tuck inside the folds.

Why bother with flag etiquette when you're excited about flying the Stars and Stripes? Consider this - for more than two hundred years, our country's military, firemen, police, and other service personnel have practiced these measures faithfully, treating our flag with the highest esteem. This is one way we can show respect and meet the high standard they have set.

The flag should be displayed on all days, especially on

New Year's Day, January 1

Inauguration Day, January 20

Lincoln's Birthday, February 12

Washington's Birthday, third Monday in February

Easter Sunday (variable)

Mother's Day, second Sunday in May

Armed Forces Day, third Saturday in May

Memorial Day (half-staff until noon), the last Monday in May Flag Day, June 14

Independence Day, July 4

Labor Day, first Monday in September

Constitution Day, September 17

Columbus Day, second Monday in October

Navy Day, October 27

Veterans Day, November 11

Thanksgiving Day, fourth Thursday in November

Christmas Day, December 25

and such other days as may be proclaimed by the President of the United States the birthdays of States (date of admission) and on State holidays.