

Rules for Flying the Canadian Flag

Dignity of the Flag

The National Flag of Canada should be displayed only in a manner befitting the national emblem; it should not be subjected to indignity or displayed in a position inferior to any other flag or ensign. The National Flag always takes precedence over all other national flags when flown in Canada. The only flags to which precedence is given over the Canadian flag are the personal standards of members of the Royal Family and of Her Majesty's representatives in Canada. The National Flag should always be flown aloft and free.

It is improper to use the National Flag of Canada as a table or seat cover or as a masking for boxes, barriers, or intervening space between floor and ground level on a dais or platform.

While it is not technically incorrect to use the National Flag of Canada to cover a statue, monument or plaque for an unveiling ceremony, it is not common practice to do so and should be discouraged.

When the National Flag of Canada is raised or lowered, or when it is carried past in a parade or review, all present should face the flag, men should remove their hats, and all should remain silent. Those in uniform should salute.

Displaying the Flag

The National Flag is flown at all federal government buildings, airports, and military bases and establishments within and outside Canada. The flag may be flown by night as well as by day.

The National Flag of Canada may be displayed as follows:

Flat against a surface, horizontally and vertically

If hung horizontally, the upper part of the leaf should be up and the stem down. If hung vertically, the flag should be placed so that the upper part of the leaf is to the left and the stem is to the right as seen by spectators. Flags hung vertically should be hung so that the canton is in the upper left corner.

On a staff

The top left (first) quarter or canton should be placed in the position nearest the top of the staff. When carried, the flag should be aloft and free.

On a flag rope (halyard)

The canton should be placed uppermost, raised as closely as possible to the top with the flag rope tight.

Suspended vertically in the middle of a street

The upper part of the leaf should face the north in an east-west street (Figure 5), and face east in a north-south street (Figure 6), thus being on the left of the observer facing east or south respectively.

Projected from a building

Displayed horizontally or at an angle from a window or balcony, the canton must point outward.

Affixed on a motor vehicle

The flag must be on a pole firmly fixed to the chassis on the front right.

Sharing the same base

When only three flags are displayed, the National Flag should be at the centre. For those facing the display, the flag of the country being honoured or given prominence is placed to the left of centre, and the other to the right.

When used to cover a casket at funerals

The canton should be draped over the upper left corner of the casket. The flag should be removed before the casket is lowered into the grave or, at a crematorium, after the service. The flag size should be 4 1/2 X 9 feet/ 1.40 X 2.80m.

Position of Honour

Due consideration should be given to flag etiquette and precedence whenever the National Flag of Canada or other sovereign national flag or provincial/territorial flag is displayed. If a purely decorative effect is desired without the involvement of precedence, it is better to confine the display to flags of lesser status; for example, house flags, pennants or coloured bunting.

Alone

When the National Flag of Canada is flown alone on top of or in front of a building where there are two flagpoles, it should be flown on the flagpole to the left of the observers facing the flag.

When the National Flag of Canada is flown alone on top of or in front of a building where there are more than two flagpoles, it should be flown as near as possible to the centre.

When the National Flag of Canada is displayed in the church or on a speaker's platform, it should be against the wall, or on a staff on the celebrant's or speaker's right as he/she faces the audience

When used in the body of a church or auditorium the National Flag of Canada should be to the right of the congregation or spectators

With flags or sovereign nations

The National Flag of Canada, when flown or paraded, takes precedence over all other national flags. When flown with the flags of other sovereign nations, all flags should be flown on separate staffs and at the same height, all being of the same size, with the National Flag of Canada occupying the position of honour.

The National Flag should be raised first and lowered last, unless the number of flags permits their being raised and lowered simultaneously.

With the flag of one other nation, the National Flag of Canada should be on the left of the observer facing the flags; both should be at the same height.

When crossed with a flag of another sovereign nation, the National Flag of Canada should be on the left of the observer facing the flags; the staff should be in front of the staff of the other flag

In a line of flags representing three flags, the National Flag of Canada should be in the centre. The other two flags should, in alphabetical order, be placed to the left and right of the National Flag, from the point of view of the observer facing the three staffs.

When there are more than three staffs, the National Flag of Canada should be flown on the left of the observer facing the flags, followed by the flags representing the other sovereign nations ordered alphabetically. An additional National Flag of Canada may be flown at the end of the line

In a semi-circle of flags representing a number of sovereign nations, the National Flag of Canada should be in the centre.

In an enclosed circle of flags representing a number of sovereign nations, the National Flag of Canada should be flown on the flagpole immediately opposite the main entrance to a building or arena

With flags of sovereign nations, provinces/territories, international organizations, cities, companies, etc.

The National Flag of Canada, when flown with different kinds of flags, should be flown on the left of a person facing the flags. The position of the other flags is by order of importance (alphabetical order for flags of sovereign nations in the official language of the country).

When displayed with a flag of another sovereign nation, a provincial/territorial flag, a company flag or club pennants on a flagpole fitted with a yardarm or a gaff, the National Flag of Canada is positioned as follows:

With flags of the Canadian provinces and territories

When provincial and territorial flags are flown with the National Flag of Canada, the order is based on precedence, which is determined by the date of entry into Confederation of the provinces and the territories. Following the Canadian flag, the sequence is as follows:

Display along a wall

An additional National Flag of Canada may be displayed at the end of the line if desired.

Display flanking an entrance

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 13 - Yukon (1898) | 1 - National Flag |
| 11 - Newfoundland (1949) | 12 - Northwest Territories (1870) |
| 9 - Saskatchewan (1905) | 10 - Alberta (1905) |
| 7 - British Columbia (1871) | 8 - Prince Edward Island (1873) |
| 5 - New Brunswick (1867) | 6 - Manitoba (1870) |
| 3 - Quebec (1867) | 4 - Nova Scotia (1867) |
| 1 - National Flag | 2 - Ontario (1867) |

"V" Display for Visual Effect

12 - Northwest Territories 13 - Yukon
10 - Alberta 11 - Newfoundland
8 - Prince Edward Island 9 - Saskatchewan
6 - Manitoba 7 - British Columbia
4 - Nova Scotia 5 - New Brunswick
2 - Ontario 3 - Quebec
1 - National Flag

Carried in a procession

If carried with other flags, in a single file, the National Flag of Canada should always lead.

If carried in line abreast, it is preferable to have the National Flag of Canada at each end of the line.

If only one National Flag of Canada is available, it should be placed in the centre of the line of flags carried abreast.

When the number of flags is even and the National Flag of Canada cannot be carried in the centre (of a line of flags abreast), it should be carried on the right-hand end of the line facing the direction of movement.

Note: It is suggested that the pole or pike used to carry flags be 7 or 8 feet/ 2.10 to 2.40m in length.

Flown on ships and boats

The National Flag of Canada is the proper national colours for all Canadian ships and boats, including pleasure craft. The Canadian Shipping Act states that a Canadian ship shall hoist the flag on a signal being made to her by one of Her Majesty's Canadian ships, or any ship in the service of and belonging to the Government of Canada; on entering or leaving any foreign port; and if of 50 tonnes gross tonnage or upwards, on entering or leaving any Commonwealth port.

Foreign vessels may fly the Canadian flag as a "courtesy flag" when they are berthed in a Canadian port. The flag then is customarily flown from the foremast.

General rules governing merchant vessels and pleasure craft are as follows:

the flag should be worn in harbour and in territorial waters but need not be worn while under way on the high seas unless the vessel wishes to identify her nationality to another ship;

whenever possible, the proper place for a vessel to display the national colours is at the stern, except that when at sea, the flag may be flown from a gaff;

when in harbour the flag should be hoisted at 0800 hours and lowered at sunset;

when a merchant ship and a warship of any nationality pass or overtake one another, the merchant ship should dip the flag as a gesture of courtesy. If on a staff, the lowest corner of the flag should be brought to the level of the rail and kept there until the salutation is acknowledged by the naval vessel. If flown from a gaff, the flag should be lowered to six feet (1.80m) above the level of the deck, until the salute is acknowledged;

in times of mourning, the flag may be flown at half-mast, which places the upper corner of the flag next to the staff at approximately three-quarters of full-hoist. As on land, a flag hoisted to or lowered from half-mast position must first be hauled close-up.

Half-masting for Mourning

Flags are flown at the half-mast position as a sign of mourning.

The flag is brought to the half-mast position by first raising it to the top of the mast then immediately lowering it slowly to the half-mast position.

The position of the flag when flying at half-mast will depend on the size of the flag and the length of the flagstaff. It must be lowered at least to a position recognizably "half-mast" to avoid the appearance of a flag which has accidentally fallen away from the top of the mast owing to a loose flag rope. A satisfactory position for half-masting is to place the centre of the flag exactly half-way down the staff (Figure 23).

On occasions requiring that one flag be flown at half-mast, all flags flown together should also be flown at half-mast. Flags will only be half-masted on those flagpoles fitted with halyards and pulleys. Some buildings fly flags from horizontal or angled poles, without halyards, to which flags are permanently attached. Flags on these will not be half-masted.

Flags on federal government buildings, airports, military bases and other establishments are flown at half-mast when directed by the Department of Canadian Heritage. The following are examples of the practice:

across Canada and abroad, on the death of the Sovereign or a member of the Royal Family related in the first degree to the Sovereign (spouse, son or daughter, father, mother, brother or sister), the Governor General, the Prime Minister, a former governor general, a former prime minister, or a federal cabinet minister;

within a province, on the death of the Lieutenant Governor, the Premier or another person similarly honoured by that province;

within his/her own riding, on the death of the Member of the House of Commons, or the Member of the Provincial/Territorial Legislature;

at his/her place of residence, on the death of a Senator, a Canadian Privy Councillor, or a Mayor.

Apart from occasions when flags on all government buildings and establishments across Canada are flown at half-mast, the flag on the Peace Tower of the Parliament Building at Ottawa is flown at half-mast:

on the death of a Lieutenant Governor;

on the death of a Canadian Privy Councillor, a Senator, or a Member of the House of Commons;

on the death of a person whom it is desired to honour.

"Death" may be taken to include the day of death and up to and including the day of the funeral.

The flag on the Peace Tower and flags at the Lester B. Pearson Building (headquarters of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade) are flown at half-mast from sunrise to sunset the day of the funeral of a foreign Head of State, a Head of Government of a Commonwealth country, or a Head of Mission accredited to Canada who dies while in office at Ottawa.

Flags at federal government buildings and other locations are also half-masted subject to special instructions on the death of members of the Royal Family other than those related in the first degree to the Sovereign, a Head of a Foreign State, or some other person whom it is desired to honour.

During periods of half-masting, the flag is raised to full-mast on all federal government buildings, airports, and military bases and establishments on statutory holidays, and also on the Peace Tower while a Head of State is visiting Parliament Hill. These procedures do not apply while flags are half-masted for the death of the Sovereign when they are only raised to full-mast for the day on which the accession of the new Monarch is proclaimed.

On Remembrance Day, November 11, the flag is flown at half-mast from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon on the Peace Tower of the Parliament Buildings.

Disposal of Flags

When a flag becomes tattered and is no longer in a suitable condition for use, it should be destroyed in a dignified way by burning it privately.