



### **When Should the US Flag be flown at half-staff?**

The United States flag is the symbol of our living nation, and has a strict code of etiquette for its display. One of the most strictly regulated is the custom of flying the flag at half-staff. *Only the president, or governors of states, territories and possessions, may order half-staff displays when it is not a normal half-staff day.*

### **How to Properly Raise and Lower the Half Staff Flag**

When raising the flag to half-staff on a vertical pole, always raise it briskly to the top of the flagpole for a moment before lowering it. When taking it down for the night, raise it to the top of the flagpole again and lower it to the bottom.

With a telescoping pole it is acceptable to put the American flag on the second set of rings instead of the top set. In this case the top set would be left empty.

On half-staff days, fly the flag at half-staff from sunrise until sunset, except for Memorial Day, when the flag is at half staff from sunrise until noon.

#### **How to Position Other Flags**

When the United States flag is flown at half-staff, all other flags should be flown at half staff or removed. When the flags are flown from adjacent staffs, all should be at

half staff. When on the same staff, the other flag or flags should be below the United States flag. The flag of the United States should be raised first and lowered last.

#### **Regular Days for Half Staff**

**The flag is always flown at half staff on the following days:**

**Peace Officers Memorial Day, May 15 (unless that date is also Armed Forces Day)**

**Patriot Day, September 11**

**Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, December 7**

**Memorial Day, last Monday in May**

#### **Special Days for Half Staff**

In addition to the traditional half-staff salutes when proclaimed by the President, the Flag Code mentions the use of our Flag for honoring citizens who have died, especially government officials and prominent citizens. However, the Flag Code does not exclude any citizen, whether they belong to an organization or not, whether they are recognized very locally or regionally. Examples of deceased citizens that might be honored with by lowering the Flag to half-staff include local religious leaders, youth leaders, honored teachers or sports coaches, local politicians, or a local hero. There need be no authorization from the government for the private sector (non-government) to use the Flag to honor any citizen. It is important to note that the Flag Code is a code, not a Law; it is intended to provide guidance and is not obligatory. It carries no civil or criminal penalties for "misuse" of the Flag. Individual are not acting illegally when using the Flag according to their own usage. Only on government / public building is the flag code required to be followed.

The flag is flown at half-staff upon the death of a past or present president, vice president, chief justice, or speaker of the House. The president can order the flag to be flown at half-staff to recognize the death of other government officials or foreign dignitaries. The flag is flown at half-staff upon the death of the governor of any U.S. state, territory or possession. The governor of a state, territory or possession is authorized to half-staff the U.S. flag upon the death of a present or former official of the government of the state, or the death of a member of the Armed Forces from that state who dies while serving on active duty.

#### **Duration**

The flag is flown at half-staff for 30 days on the death of a president or a former president. Ten days is required for the death of the vice president, chief justice, retired chief justice or speaker of the House. The flag is at half-staff from the day of death until interment for an associate justice of the Supreme Court, the secretary of an executive or military department, a former vice president, or the governor of a state, territory, or possession. The flag is at half-staff on the day of death and the following day for a member of Congress.

**When Not to Use Half Staff**

The flag is **not** flown at half staff on the following days:

Veterans' Day, November 11

Armed Forces Day, the third Saturday in May

President's Day, the third Monday in February

Upon the death of anyone not specified in the code



US Code

TITLE 4 - FLAG AND SEAL, SEAT OF GOVERNMENT, AND THE STATES  
Sections 1-10