

States shall be displayed at half-staff in accordance with such orders or instructions as may be issued by or at the direction of the President, or in accordance with recognized customs or practices not inconsistent with law.

5. The heads of the several departments and agencies of the Government may direct that the flag of the United States be flown at half-staff on buildings, grounds, or naval vessels under their jurisdiction on occasions other than those specified herein which they consider proper, and that suitable military honors be rendered as appropriate.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the United States of America to be affixed.

DONE at the City of Washington this 1st day of March in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and fifty-four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and seventy-eighth.

[SEAL]

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER.

§ 8. Respect for flag

No disrespect should be shown to the flag of the United States of America; the flag should not be dipped to any person or thing. Regimental colors, State flags, and organization or institutional flags are to be dipped as a mark of honor.

(a) The flag should never be displayed with the union down, except as a signal of dire distress in instances of extreme danger to life or property.

(b) The flag should never touch anything beneath it, such as the ground, the floor, water, or merchandise.

(c) The flag should never be carried flat or horizontally, but always aloft and free, except as may be necessary in limited circumstances and done in a respectful manner as part of a military or patriotic observance.

(d) The flag should never be used as wearing apparel, bedding, or drapery. It should never be festooned, drawn back, nor up, in folds, but always allowed to fall free. Bunting of blue, white, and red, always arranged with the blue above, the white in the middle, and the red below, should be used for covering a speaker's desk, draping the front of the platform, and for decoration in general.

(e) The flag should never be fastened, displayed, used, or stored in such a manner as to permit it to be easily torn, soiled, or damaged in any way.

(f) The flag should never be used as a covering for a ceiling.

(g) The flag should never have placed upon it, nor on any part of it, nor attached to it any mark, insignia, letter, word, figure, design, picture, or drawing of any nature.

(h) The flag should never be used as a receptacle for receiving, holding, carrying, or delivering anything.

(i) The flag should never be used for advertising purposes in any manner whatsoever. It should not be embroidered on such articles as cushions or handkerchiefs and the like, printed or otherwise impressed on paper napkins or boxes or anything that is designed for temporary use and discard. Advertising signs should not be fastened to a staff or halyard from which the flag is flown.

(j) No part of the flag should ever be used as a costume or athletic uniform. However, a flag

patch may be affixed to the uniform of military personnel, firemen, policemen, and members of patriotic organizations. The flag represents a living country and is itself considered a living thing. Therefore, the lapel flag pin being a replica, should be worn on the left lapel near the heart.

(k) The flag, when it is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display, should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning.

(Added Pub. L. 105-225, §2(a), Aug. 12, 1998, 112 Stat. 1497; amended Pub. L. 118-159, div. A, title XVII, §1703(a), Dec. 23, 2024, 138 Stat. 2208.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Revised Section	Source (U.S. Code)	Source (Statutes at Large)
8	36:176.	June 22, 1942, ch. 435, §4, 56 Stat. 379; Dec. 22, 1942, ch. 806, §4, 56 Stat. 1076; July 7, 1976, Pub. L. 94-344, (12)-(16), 90 Stat. 812.

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

2024—Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 118-159 inserted “, except as may be necessary in limited circumstances and done in a respectful manner as part of a military or patriotic observance” after “aloft and free”.

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

MODIFICATION OF DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE POLICY

Pub. L. 118-159, div. A, title XVII, §1703(b), Dec. 23, 2024, 138 Stat. 2208, provided that: “The Secretary of Defense shall—

“(1) rescind the February 10, 2023, Department of Defense memorandum entitled, ‘Clarification of Department of Defense Community Engagement Policy on Showing Proper Respect to the United States Flag’; and

“(2) support military recruitment through public outreach events during patriotic and military observances, including the display of the United States flag regardless of size and position, including horizontally, provided that, in accordance with section 8(b) of title 4, United States Code, the flag never touch anything beneath it, such as the ground, the floor, water, or merchandise.”

§ 9. Conduct during hoisting, lowering or passing of flag

During the ceremony of hoisting or lowering the flag or when the flag is passing in a parade or in review, all persons present in uniform should render the military salute. Members of the Armed Forces and veterans who are present but not in uniform may render the military salute. All other persons present should face the flag and stand at attention with their right hand over the heart, or if applicable, remove their headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart. Citizens of other countries present should stand at attention. All such conduct toward the flag in a moving column should be rendered at the moment the flag passes.

(Added Pub. L. 105-225, §2(a), Aug. 12, 1998, 112 Stat. 1498; Pub. L. 110-181, div. A, title V, §594, Jan. 28, 2008, 122 Stat. 138.)