

Flag Etiquette

The Flag Etiquette information published by The American Legion is an effort to increase the knowledge of the general public in the proper display and respect for the flag of the United States of America. Flag Etiquette can be found on The American Legion website, and can be found thru Emblem Sales (*Let's Be Right on Flag Etiquette*).

In the 1976 revision of the Flag Code by Congress, the symbolism of the United States flag is considered to be a living symbol representing a living country. This reference was added in response to the strong feelings of respect and reverence accorded by many of our citizens. In addition, the flag represents the many freedoms, rights and responsibilities not entrusted to the citizens of any other country in the world. Therefore, the proper display and use of the United States flag is the responsibility of every American citizen. It should be pointed out that the Flag Code is simply a guideline for proper flag etiquette. The law does not provide penalties for violations of any of its provisions. Misuse and improper display will, however, most likely incur ridicule and harassment from those more familiar with these provisions.

The Flag Code as with any codification of rules and customs, the Flag Code is not intended to cover every instance of display and use. The guidelines in the code cover a number of situations and practices which were traditionally used prior to the passage of the law. Common sense in most other cases will dictate the proper display and respect due the flag.

The reader of the Flag Code will encounter questions and answers that concern American Legion specific issues regarding the Flag Code. These questions do not relate to a particular portion of the Flag Code, but deal with American Legion protocol or tradition. This is especially true regarding presentation and display of the United States flag at American Legion meetings.

The interpretations of the Flag Code come from the most frequently asked questions and The American Legion's response to the hundreds of letters, e-mails, and phone calls received annually.

Some of the sections covered are:

Section 4: Pledge of Allegiance to the flag; manner of delivery

Section 5: Display and use of flag by civilians; codifications of rules and customs; definition

Section 6: Time and occasions for display

Section 7: Position and manner of display

Section 8: Respect for flag

Section 9: Conduct during hoisting, lowering or passing of flag

Section 10: Modification of rules and customs by President

Flag folding program, Color Guards and the Flag Code, and The Top Ten Flag Myths are covered in *Let's Be Right on Flag Etiquette*.

On July 24, 2006 President Bush signed "The Freedom to Display the American Flag Act of 2005" (H.R. 42) into law. The law ensures the right of an individual to display the flag of the United States at their home.

In the *Let's Be Right on Flag Etiquette* The American Legion has put a lot of good information into this publication. I hope everyone has a chance to see this publication. I think it will answer most if not all of your questions on Flag Etiquette and respect for the Flag of the United States of America.

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Vice Chairman Americanism Commission