

GENERAL ORDER



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Subject Displaying and Handling of the United States Flag		
Topic	Series	Number
OMA	203	02
Effective Date October 7, 2010		
Replaces: GO-OMA-203.02 (Displaying and Handling of the United States Flag), Effective Date 03/25/2003		

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I. BACKGROUND

On June 14, 1777, in order to establish an official flag for the new nation, the Continental Congress passed the first Flag Act, which states "The flag of the United States be made of thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new Constellation." The flag is the symbol of our national unity, our national endeavor, and our national aspiration. As a result, proper etiquette was established in the displaying and handling of the United States flag.

II. POLICY

The policy of the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) is to properly and respectfully display and handle the flag of the United States (US) at all MPD facilities.

III. PROCEDURES

A. Displaying the United States Flag

1. The US flag shall be displayed each day from 0700 hours to sunset at all MPD facilities.

- a. In inclement weather, old flags that are in good condition shall be used if available.
 - b. In fair weather, clean, bright flags shall always be used.
2. The US flag may be displayed at night provided it is properly illuminated.
3. The flag shall be raised to the peak of the staff, unless the flag is to be displayed at half-staff, with the union (blue field) at the uppermost point when being displayed from a staff that is:
 - a. Anchored into the ground;
 - b. Projecting horizontally or at any angle from a:
 - (1) Window sill;
 - (2) Balcony; or
 - (3) Front of a building.
4. When the flag is displayed in a manner other than being flown from a staff, it shall be displayed flat, either horizontally or vertically, whether indoors or out. The blue field shall be uppermost and to the flag's own right (observer's left).
5. When the US flag is displayed:
 - a. With one (1) or a number of flags of states, localities or pennants of societies, the US flag shall be displayed on the right (observer's left) and should be at the highest point.
 - b. With flags of two (2) or more nations, they shall be flown from separate staffs of the same height. The flags should be of approximately equal size. International usage forbids the display of the flag of one (1) nation above that of another nation in time of peace.
 - c. From a staff in a public auditorium, on or off a podium, the flag shall hold the position of superior prominence, in advance of the audience, and in the position of honor at the speaker's right as he/she faces the audience (to the left of the audience). Any other flag so displayed shall be placed on the left of the speaker (to the right of the audience).

- d. With another flag against a wall from crossed staffs, the US flag shall be on the right, the flag's own right (observer's left), and its staff shall be in front of the staff of the other flag.
 - e. In a procession with another flag, or flags, the US flag shall be either on the marching right, (the flag's own right), or, if there is a line of other flags, in front of the center of that line.
- 6. The US flag at all MPD facilities shall only be placed at half-staff upon declaration from the President of the United States or the Mayor of the District of Columbia.
 - 7. The Chief of Police may direct the US flag to be flown at half-staff at MPD buildings upon the death notification of an active or retired member of the MPD. In such a case, the flag shall remain at half-staff until the conclusion of the funeral.
 - 8. The US flag may be flown at half-staff on the following days without a proclamation from the President or the Mayor:

- a. May 15-Peace Officers Memorial Day;
- b. Last Monday in May- Memorial Day;

NOTE: On Memorial Day, the flag shall be flown at half staff until noon, then raised to the peak.

- c. September 11- Patriotic Day;
- d. First Sunday in October- start of Fire Prevention Week; (Public Law: 107-51)
- e. December 7- National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day; and
- f. Upon reliable information that a past or present President, Vice President, Chief Justice or Speaker of the House has died.

B. Raising, Lowering and Handling the United States Flag

- 1. The flag shall be raised briskly and lowered slowly and ceremoniously.
- 2. At no time, shall any portion of the flag be allowed to touch the ground, and every precaution shall be taken to prevent the flag from becoming soiled.
- 3. When the flag is flown at half-staff, it shall be raised in a brisk manner to the peak of the staff and then lowered slowly to the half-staff position.

When being lowered for the day, the flag shall be raised to the peak of the staff and then lowered.

4. The raising, lowering and folding of the flag shall be performed by two (2) uniformed members of the MPD, fully attired in the uniform of the day, including the eight point hat.
 - a. Both members shall fold/unfold the flag and attach/detach it to the flagstaff.
 - (1) One (1) member shall raise/lower the flag to the proper position.
 - (2) One (1) member shall render a right hand salute, until such time as the flag is secured at its proper position on the staff.
 - b. Members in uniform who observe the raising and/or lowering of the US flag shall stand at attention and render the right hand salute with their hand touching the brim of their hat or during instances when a member does not have his/her hat, place his/her right hand over the member's heart until the flag is properly secured.
 - c. When both members detach the flag from the staff, they shall immediately proceed in properly folding the flag, as prescribed by the illustrations contained in Attachment "A".

C. Responsibilities of Commanding Officials

Commanding Officials shall ensure that two (2) members of their command are available at 0700 hours and at sundown for the purpose of performing the ceremony of raising and lowering the flag.

D. Acquisition of New Flags

Any MPD facility in need of a new US flag shall:

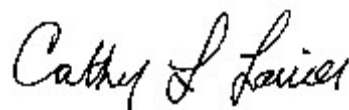
1. Complete a PD Form 160 (Requisition for Supplies and Services) and submit it with two (2) copies to the Equipment and Supply Branch, General Support Services Division, Corporate Support Bureau.
2. Any worn or soiled flag shall be returned to the Equipment and Supplies Unit, to be disposed of properly.

IV. CROSS REFERENCES

- A. Public Law 107-51

V. ATTACHMENT

- A. Illustration displaying the proper way to fold the U.S. Flag.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cathy L. Lanier". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cathy L. Lanier
Chief of Police

CLL:PH:MOC:CC

How to Fold the United States Flag

Step 1



To properly fold the flag, begin by holding it waist-high with another person so that its surface is parallel to the ground.

Step 2



Fold the lower half of the stripe section lengthwise over the field of stars, holding the bottom and top edges securely.

Step 3



Fold the flag again lengthwise with the blue field on the outside.

Step 4



Make a triangular fold by bringing the striped corner of the folded edge to meet the open (top) edge of the flag.

Step 5



Turn the outer (red) point inward, parallel to the open edge, to form a second triangle.

Step 6



The triangular folding is continued until the entire length of the flag is folded in this manner.

Step 7



When the flag is completely folded, only a triangular blue field of stars should be visible.