

AMERICAN FLAG ETIQUETTE

COMPLETE GUIDE TO PROPER FLAG DISPLAY

Learn the essential rules for
displaying the American flag with
proper respect and protocol.



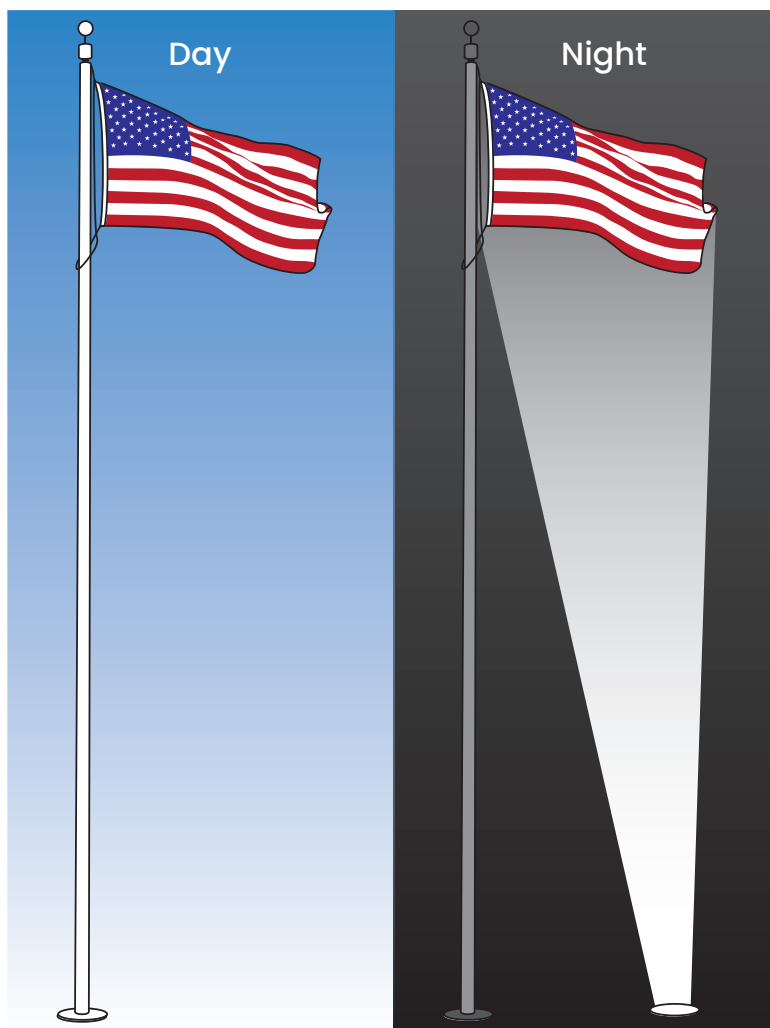
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BASIC AMERICAN FLAG DISPLAY RULES

Universal flag etiquette dictates that you should display the **American flag** only from sunrise to sunset on buildings and on stationary flagstaffs in the open. However, when a patriotic effect is desired, the flag may be displayed twenty-four hours a day if properly illuminated during the hours of darkness.



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This rule, and many others, guide Americans in the **proper flag etiquette** for how to hang the American flag. **Flag display guidelines** follow a few general rules, such as hanging the American flag in a specific and prominent position relevant to other flags, and the direction the flag should face.

For **videos and tutorials on flag etiquette and installations**, visit our YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/@flagandbanner



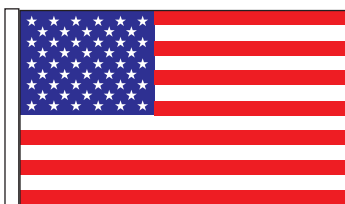
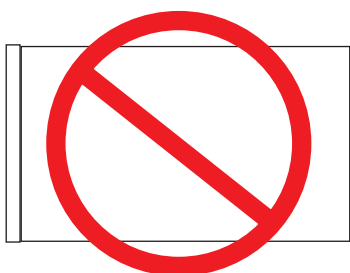
FLAG HIERARCHY AND POSITIONING RULES

No other flag or pennant should be placed above or, if on the same level, to the right of the flag of the United States of America, except during church services conducted by naval chaplains at sea, when the church pennant may be flown above the flag during church services for the personnel of the Navy.

— U.S. Code 2011, Title 4, Chapter 1, Section 7(c)

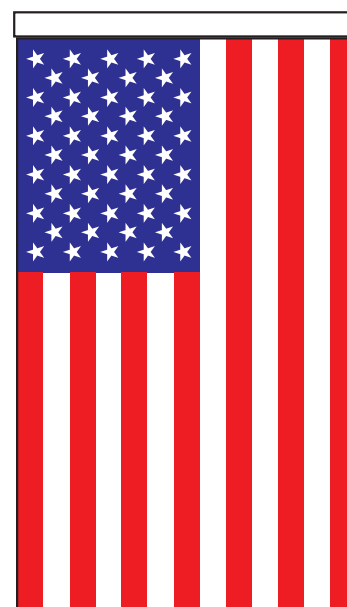
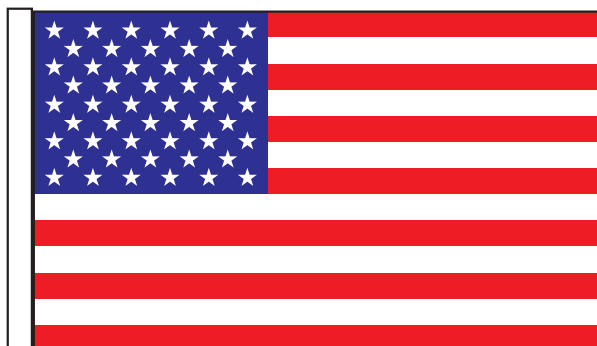
★ HOW TO DISPLAY THE AMERICAN FLAG ON WALLS AND WINDOWS

When displayed either horizontally or vertically against a wall, **the union should be uppermost and to the flag's own right**, that is, to the observer's left. When displayed in a window, the American flag should be displayed in the same way, with the union or blue field to the left of the observer in the street.



Key Wall and Window Display Rules:

- Union (blue field) placement: Always uppermost and to the flag's own right
- Window display: Blue field to the left of street observers
- Wall mounting: Union to observer's left when viewing



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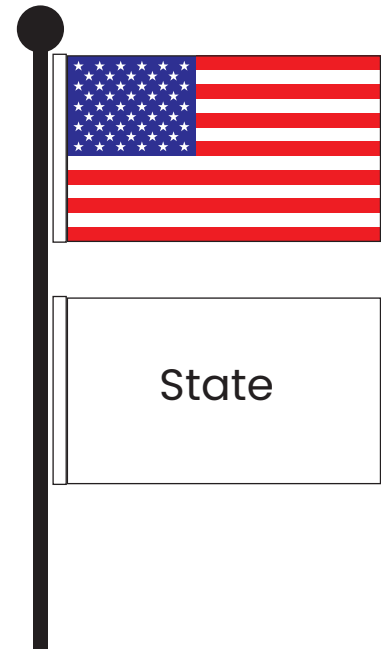


STATE, CITY, AND LOCAL FLAG DISPLAY GUIDELINES

When flags of States, cities, localities, companies, or pennants of societies are flown on the same halyard with the flag of the United States, the American flag should always be at the top with six (6) inches between each flag displayed.

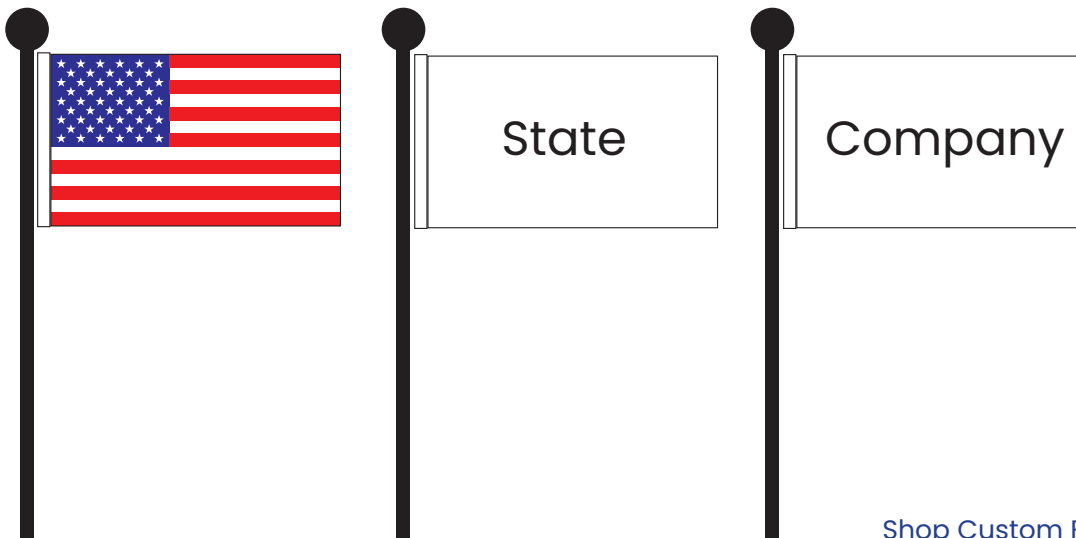
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DISPLAYING A US FLAG WITH A STATE OR COMPANY FLAG

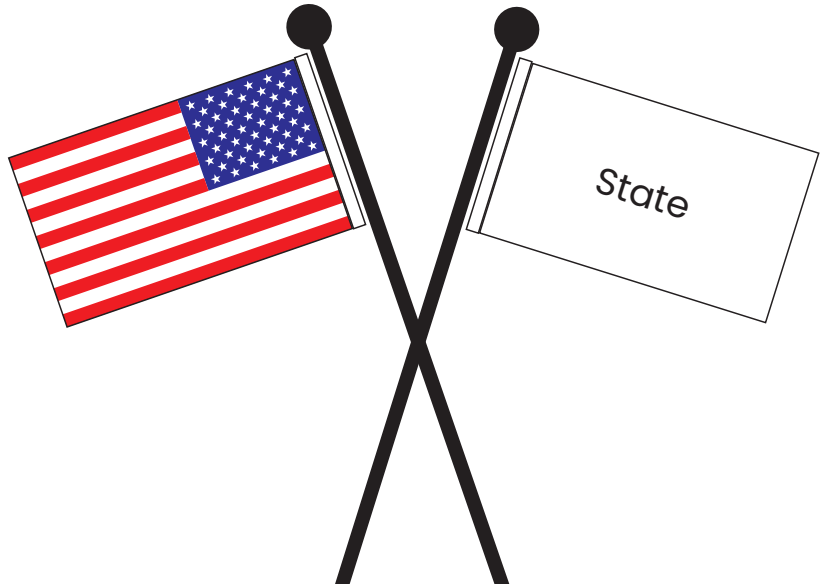
When the flags are flown from adjacent staffs, the American flag should always be hoisted first and lowered last. No such flag or pennant may be placed above the flag of the United States or to the United States flag's own right (or the observers left).



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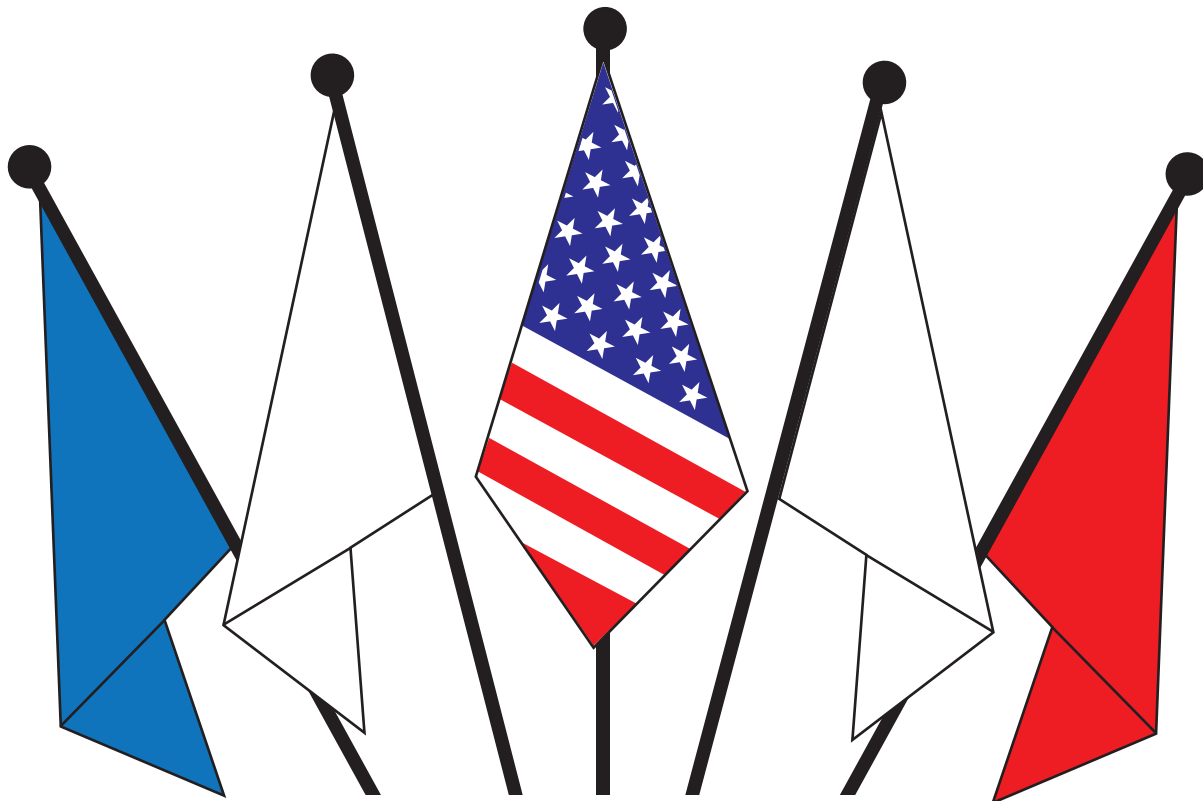
DISPLAYING FLAGS WITH CROSSED STAFFS

The American flag, when displayed with another flag against a wall from crossed staffs, should be on the flag's own right and its staff should be in front of the staff of the other flag.



DISPLAYING FLAGS WITH MULTIPLE FLAGS

The American flag should be at the center and at the highest point of the group when a number of flags of States, localities or pennants of societies are grouped and displayed from staffs.



★ MILITARY FLAG DISPLAY ORDER

THE ORDER OF PRECEDENCE

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For **military displays**, from the viewer's left to right, when displaying flags together in a military context is to display the United States Flag (also known as the "colors" or "national colors"), followed by the flags of the:

1. U.S. Army
2. U.S. Marine Corps
3. U.S. Navy
4. U.S. Air Force
5. U.S. Space Force
6. U.S. Coast Guard



POW/MIA FLAG REQUIREMENTS

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On November 7, 2019, the President signed into law S. 693, the National POW/MIA Flag Act which honors service members who are Prisoners of War (POW) or Missing in Action (MIA) by increasing frequency of POW/MIA flag display on specified Federal properties.



The National POW/MIA Flag Act ensures that the POW/MIA Flag is displayed whenever the U.S. flag is displayed at designated federal locations including:

- **Federal buildings:** U.S. Capitol, White House, major military installations
- **Memorials:** WWII Memorial, Korean War Veterans Memorial, Vietnam Veterans Memorial
- **VA facilities:** All Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers
- **Post offices:** Every United States Postal Service location

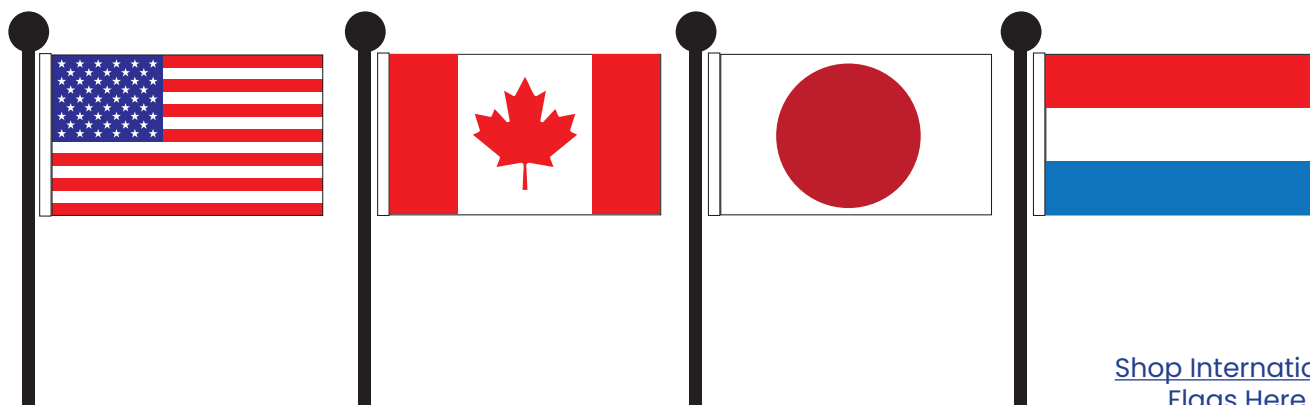
NEW JERSEY KIA FLAG DISPLAY RULES

Effective August 7, 2017, Bill #S1497 requires all municipal buildings to fly the KIA Flag at the State House in Trenton, the principal municipal building in each municipality, and the principal county building in each county seat during normal business hours.

★ INTERNATIONAL FLAG DISPLAY PROTOCOL

When flags of two or more nations are displayed, they are to 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 nation above that of another nation in time of peace.

- **United Nations flag:** No person shall display the flag of the United Nations above the American flag within the United States
- **International flags:** Must be displayed at equal height and prominence



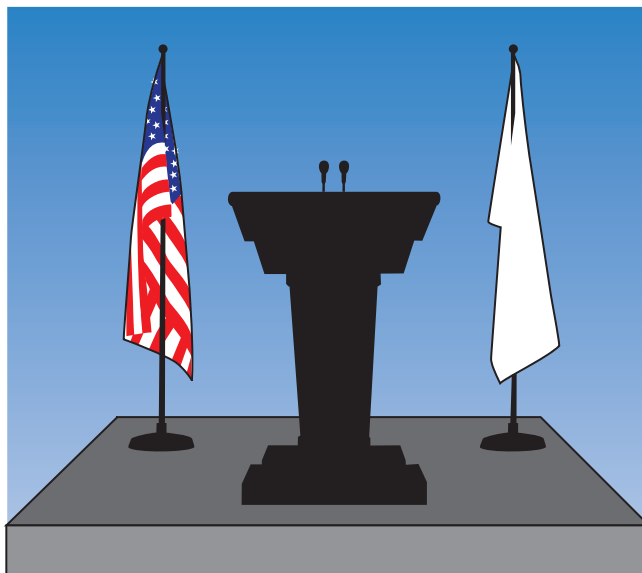
[Shop International
Flags Here](#)

★ INDOOR FLAG DISPLAY AND PRESENTATION RULES

When used on a speaker's platform, the flag, if displayed flat, should be displayed above and behind the speaker. When displayed from a staff in a church or public auditorium, **the flag of the United States should hold the position of superior prominence**, in advance of the audience, and in the position of honor at the clergyman's or speaker's right as he faces the audience.

Shop Indoor Flag Options:

- [U.S. State Flags for Indoor Presentation](#)
- [Indoor American Flag Sets](#)
- [World Flags for International Displays](#)
- [Military Service Flags](#)



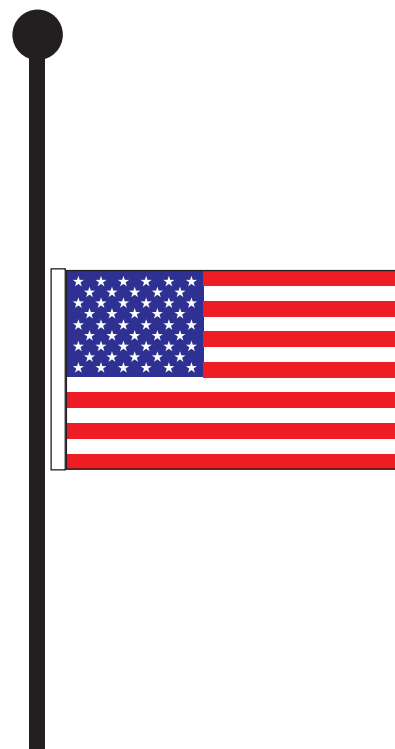


HALF-STAFF GUIDELINES

The flag, when flown at half-staff, should be first hoisted to the peak for an instant and then lowered to the half-staff position. The flag should be again raised to the peak before it is lowered for the day.

By order of the President, the flag shall be flown at half-staff upon the death of principal figures of the United States Government and the Governor of the State, territory or possession, as a mark of respect to their memory. In the event of the death of other officials of foreign dignitaries, the American flag etiquette rules state the flag is to be displayed at half-staff according to presidential instructions of orders, or in accordance with recognized customs practices not inconsistent with law.

- **President or former President:** 30 days from death
- **Vice President, Chief Justice, Speaker of House:** 10 days from death
- **Associate Justice, Cabinet Secretary, former VP:** Day of death until interment
- **Member of Congress:** Day of death and following day
- **Memorial Day:** Half-staff until noon only, then raised to top
- **National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service:** Half-staff from sunrise to sunset
- **Peace Officer's Memorial Day:** Half-staff from sunrise to sunset on all government buildings
- **Patriot Day:** Half-staff from sunrise to sunset
- **Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day:** Half-staff from sunrise to sunset



[Check Current American Flag Status Here](#)
[Sign up for Half-Staff Alerts Here](#)

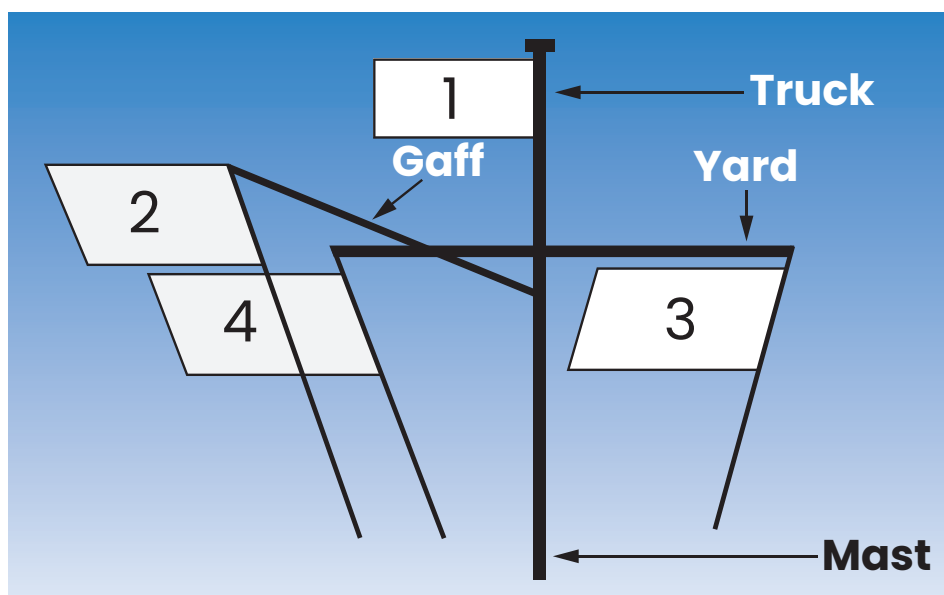


NAUTICAL FLAG DISPLAY GUIDELINES

For yacht clubs and marine displays, specific nautical flag etiquette applies based on mast configuration:

MAST CONFIGURATION RULES

- **Single Mast:** U.S. Ensign (flag) at truck (**#1**), other flags below
- **Mast with Yard:** U.S. Ensign (flag) at truck (**#1**), club burgee at starboard (right) yard arm (**#3**)
- **Mast with Yard and Gaff:** U.S. Ensign (flag) at gaff (**#2**), club burgee at truck (**#1**), flags **#3** and **#4** vary depending on the activity at the club



It is display **#3** that causes the most confusion. This puts the club burgee in a higher position physically, but not above that of the U.S. Ensign (flag) symbolically. By the normal Flag Code provisions, this would seem to be an incorrect display. **The tradition of the seas, however, is to hold the gaff as the position of honor; thus, the intent of this tradition and display is to give proper respect to the flag.**

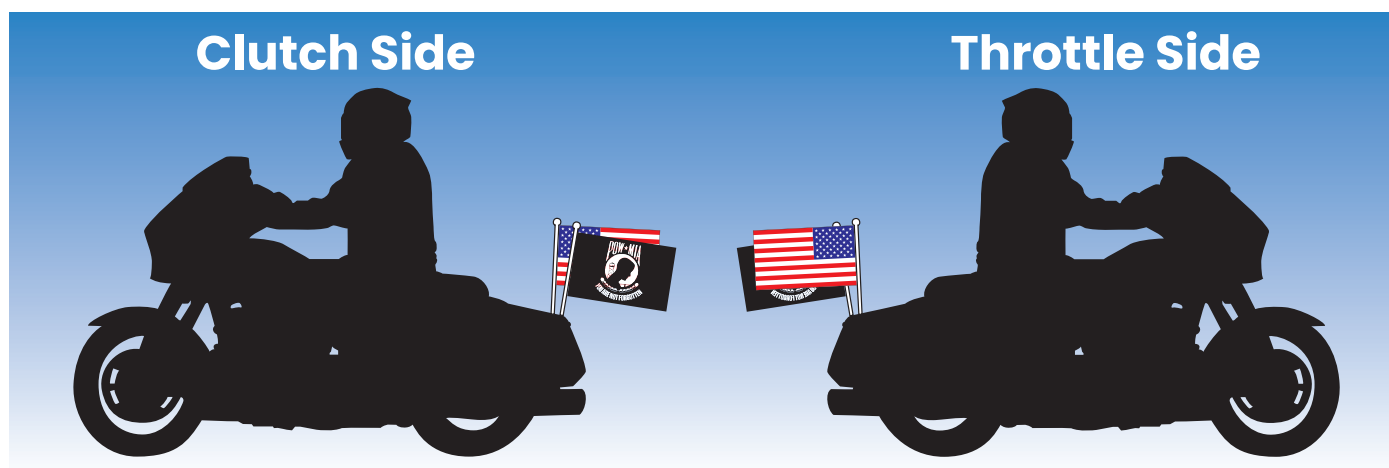
Where a yard is involved, rules provide that when a foreign ensign is displayed, the U.S. Ensign (flag) is flown at **#3**; the foreign ensign at **#4**; the club burgee at **#1**; and other flags at **#2**.

The gaff extends aft (to the rear), and a mast on yacht club grounds is faced seaward. Therefore the gaff will (or should) be directed toward the land. The observation point then becomes a point somewhere on the sea side of the mast. This then makes the placement of the U.S. Ensign (flag) in regard to the foreign ensign conform to Flag Code provisions. [Shop Nautical Flagpoles Here](#)



VEHICLE AND MOTORCYCLE FLAG DISPLAY

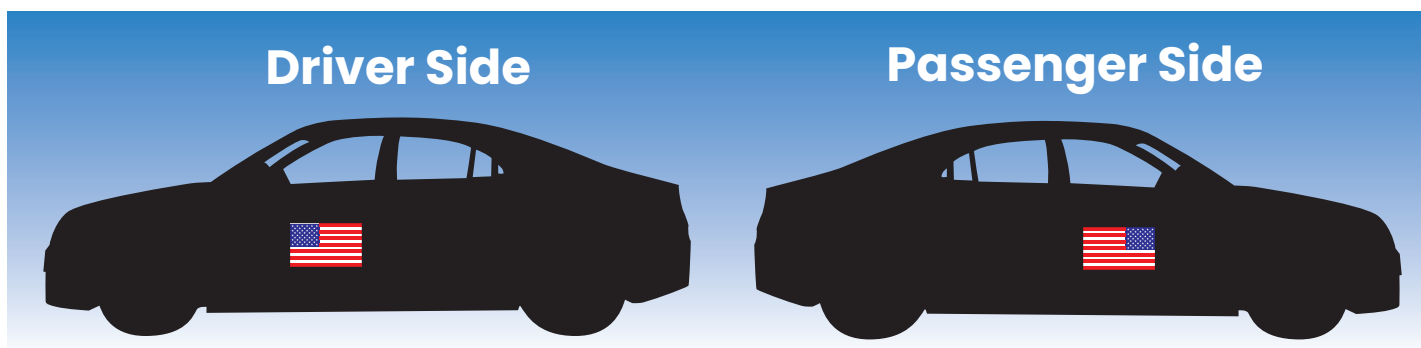
When the **US flag is flown alone on a motorcycle**, it needs to be centered on the back of the motorcycle, or to its “marching right.” The “marching right” is on the right (throttle) side of the motorcycle to the rider’s perspective when facing forward.



Vehicle Flag Guidelines:

- **Single flag:** Centered or to marching right
- **Multiple flags:** US flag at center and highest position
- **Flag decals:** Driver side door: Union to viewer’s left
Passenger side door: Union to the viewer’s right
- **Size consistency:** All flags same size and height when displayed together

The flag should not be draped over the hood, top, sides, or back of a vehicle or of a railroad train or a boat.





FLAG PINS AND PATCHES ETIQUETTE

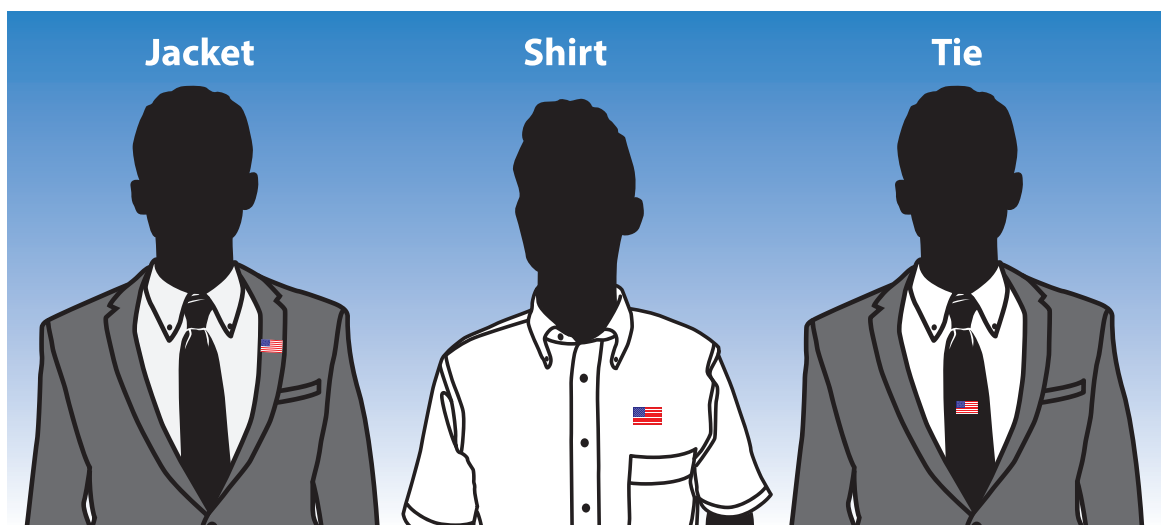
"No part of the flag should ever be used as a costume or athletic uniform. However, a flag patch may be affixed to the uniform of military personnel, firemen, policemen, and members of patriotic organizations.

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." — U.S. Code, Title 4, Chapter 1, Section 8(j)

PIN GUIDELINES

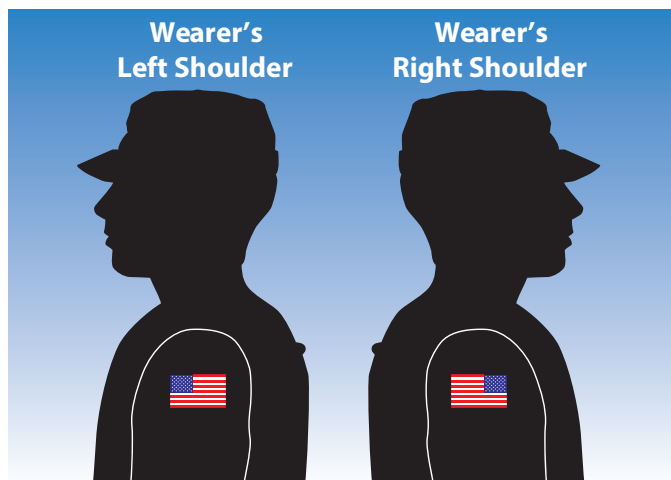
[Shop American Flag Lapel Pin Here](#)

- **Jacket:** Left lapel near the heart
- **Shirt:** Over heart on left
- **Tie:** Centered in visible tie



PATCH GUIDELINES

- **Left sleeve patches:** Union to viewer's left
- **Right sleeve patches:** Union to viewer's right (forward-facing)
- **Authorized wear:** Military, police, fire, patriotic organizations only



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ADDITIONAL FLAG ETIQUETTE RESOURCES

For comprehensive flag guidance, visit the [National Flag Foundation](https://www.flagandbanner.com/national-flag-foundation) and explore their detailed protocols for proper flag display and care.

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