

# UNITED NATIONS FLAG ETIQUETTE IN CANADA

## AIM & SCOPE

01. The instructions described below are established to interpret and elaborate on the rules laid down in the United Nations Flag Code of 1947 and its Regulations, as modified in 1952, hereafter referred to as the "Flag Code". It is hereby intended to determine their application for local use of the United Nations Flag, hereafter referred to as the "Flag" insofar as they apply in Canada. These rules for flag etiquette are intended for use by Canadian veteran's organizations and civic groups in Canada.

## DEFINITIONS

02. The following definitions apply herein:

- a. The word "**Flag**" means the United Nations Flag;
- b. The term "**Flag Code**" means the United Nations Flag Code and Regulations;
- c. The term "**National Flag**" means the National Flag of Canada;
- d. The title "**Secretary-General**" means the Secretary-General of the United Nations Organization; and
- e. The term "**Half-Mast**" means positioning a flag so that its centre is exactly halfway down the flagpole as a sign of official mourning.

## USE

03. The use of the official flag of the United Nations Organization (UN) is governed by the United Nations Flag Code of 1947. The rules contained in the United Nations Flag Code and Regulations should be observed in Canada in accordance with these guidelines. Where there is a conflict of interpretation, the Flag Code has precedence.

## HISTORY

04. The original Flag was presented during the first United Nations conference in 1945. It was modified in 1946 and the final version was adopted in 1947 along with the Flag Code.



## DESCRIPTION

05. The Flag utilizes blue as a background and white as the colour of the motif, these two colours are the official colours of the United Nations. The central motif, represents a world map formed by an azimuthal equidistant projection centered on the North Pole inscribed in a wreath consisting of olive branches,

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### SYMBOLS AND DIMENSIONS

06. The olive branch symbolizes peace since Greek Antiquity. The world map depicts the area of concern to the Organisation in achieving its main purpose: peace and security. Blue also represents the sky and the spirit, and white purity and peace.
07. The Flag measures 2 by 3 - two parts in height by three parts in length. The garrison version size measures 4 by 5. When flown with other flags in Canada, the Flag may be made to the same dimensions as the National Flag.

### DISPLAY

08. The Flag Code was modified in 1952 to permit the display of the Flag by organizations and persons desiring to demonstrate their support of the United Nations, Article 5 reads;  
*"The flag may be used in accordance with this Flag Code by Governments, organizations and individuals to demonstrate support of the United Nations and to further its principles and purposes. The manner and circumstances of display shall conform, in so far as appropriate, to the laws and customs applicable to the display of the national flag of the country in which the display is made."*
09. Pursuant to the above, the Flag may be used liberally as a sign of support for the United Nations Organization and its works on special occasions in Canada where there is a significant link to the United Nations; at any time or at all times, following the flag etiquette for the National Flag.
10. The ceremonial Flag may be displayed on an indoor pole and stand.

### PRECEDENCE

11. The Flag shall not be subordinated to any other flag in the order of international precedence. In Canada, it is placed immediately behind or to the right of the National Flag or military ensigns and banners when facing the flags.
12. The Flag shall be placed after the National Flag or military flags and before all other flags listed below:
  - a. international organizations;
  - b. provinces, territories, and municipalities;
  - c. veterans' associations; and
  - d. civic, commercial or other civilian groups.

### PROTOCOL

13. The Flag may be flown alone or with other flags, on a flagpole or flagstaff from buildings. When the Flag is displayed with one or more flags, all other flags so displayed should be displayed on the same level and should be of approximately equal size. No other flag may be displayed on a higher level or be larger than the Flag.
14. It may be displayed on either side of any other flag subject to international flag protocol. It may be flown on all national and official holidays or on the occasion of any official event where it may be desired to relate in some way to the United Nations.

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### SPECIAL OCCASIONS

15. The Flag may be displayed, flown, or carried on certain special occasions in a manner as determined by the Flag Code, the Secretary-General, or as specified herein. The Flag may be flown on all national and official holidays in Canada according to circumstance.
16. Special occasions in Canada to fly the Flag include the following dates:
  - a. May 29<sup>th</sup> International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers;
  - b. July 1<sup>st</sup> Canada Day;
  - c. July 27<sup>th</sup> Korean War Armistice Day;
  - d. August 9<sup>th</sup> National Peacekeeper's Day;
  - e. September 21<sup>st</sup> United Nations International Day of Peace;
  - f. October 24<sup>th</sup> United Nations Day; and
  - g. November 11<sup>th</sup> Remembrance Day.

### HALF-MASTING

17. The act of half-masting the Flag is done only on official commemorative occasions or when a person has died in the service of peace or of the United Nations Organization.
18. When displayed at half-mast, the Flag should first be hoisted to the peak for an instant and then lowered to the half-mast position. The Flag should again be raised to the peak before it is lowered for the day.
19. The Flag shall be lowered to half-mast on the following occasions:
  - a. when the Secretary-General of the United Nations Organization dies while in office;
  - b. upon the death of a Canadian Peacekeeper serving on a current peacekeeping operation;
  - c. upon the death of a Peacekeeping Veteran in Canada; and
  - d. when directed by the Secretary-General; or
  - e. on occasions when the National Flag is brought to half-mast.
20. For the occasions listed above, the Flag shall remain at half-mast for the day of notice of death and the following day.
21. In Canada, the Flag shall be lowered to half-mast on the following commemorative dates:
  - a. May 29<sup>th</sup> International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers;
  - b. July 27<sup>th</sup> Korean War Armistice Day;
  - c. August 9<sup>th</sup> National Peacekeeper's Day; and
  - d. November 11<sup>th</sup> Remembrance Day.
22. On commemorative days listed above, the Flag shall be flown at half-mast from dawn to dusk. This is done to pay homage to all those who have sacrificed their lives on the field of honour in the service of peace and in defence of the principles of the United Nations.
23. The Flag may not be lowered to half mast for any other commemorative occasion without a specific directive from the United Nations Organization Headquarters or one of its agencies.

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### FUNERALS

24. The Flag may be displayed or carried at the funeral of a peacekeeper or peacekeeping veteran. The Flag must never be used to drape the coffin in lieu of the National Flag.

### PROHIBITIONS

25. The following is considered a violation of flag etiquette and misuse of the Flag:
  - a. dipping the Flag as a salute;
  - b. flying the Flag upside down, on the same flagpole with another flag, or above the National Flag.
  - c. festooning the Flag, drawing it back or up, in folds, or allowing it to touch the ground, floor or ships' deck;
  - d. using the Flag as a drapery, wall ornament, table cover, facing, curtain, or to cover a statue;
  - e. draping oneself, or a casket, with the Flag;
  - f. tearing the Flag or burning it publicly for disposal;
  - g. sewing items to the Flag, defacing, marking or modifying it in any way;
  - h. flying a ceremonial version of the Flag on a flagpole or temporarily substituting another flag on the same flagpole;
  - i. flying the Flag at half-mast without authorization, for an individual who is not entitled to it, or after 11:20 AM on November 11th; and
  - j. displaying the Flag when or where it is inappropriate or subjecting it to any other indignity.

### CARE & DISPOSAL

26. The flag is an honoured and international symbol of peace, hope and sacrifice. It shall be respected and cared for; kept safe and clean at all times. The flag may be washed by hand and only minor repairs may be made to it.
27. When damaged, defaced, worn out or permanently soiled, the Flag shall be disposed of in the dignified manner by burning it in private without ceremony. When disposed of, the Flag must be replaced immediately.