

Flag Protocol, Flag Folding, and Flag Raising Script

Flag Etiquette

- The US Flag is always on its own RIGHT.
 - When marching in, it will be the rightmost flag in the line when coming in abreast or the first flag in a single file line.
 - Note, when coming in with flags abreast the US flag will “cross the colors”, that is, it will move from the rightmost side of the line to the left side of the stage/display area. The color guard should make sure that the US flag has priority in “crossing the colors” and all other flags defer to the national flag before they move
 - When posted at the front of the room, it still needs to be on its own RIGHT, but now from the perspective of facing the audience from the podium/front (stage right, audience left).
 - During a flag ceremony of either hoisting the US flag on a flag pole or displaying on a flag stand (as in an auditorium) all the other flags (troop flags, state flags) should be dipped forward in deference to the national flag during the ceremony. After the ceremony ends, the other flags should then be placed in the flag stands or raised upright.
- Within the US, in a row of flag poles, the US flag should be the highest flying flag (on the center pole of a typical 3 pole camp arrangement). It should be the highest flying flag on a yardarm (usually on the gaff) or topmost flag on a single flag pole. The US flag is raised first and lowered last.
- Within the US, no other flag or pennant should be placed above, or, if on the same level, to the right of the US flag. Out of country, traditionally all international flags fly at equal heights and are usually arranged in alphabetical country order starting from stage right.
- The flag is raised briskly and lowered slowly. In half mast situations, the US flag is hoisted to the top of the pole and then lowered to half-staff. In lowering from half mast, the flag is raised to top of pole and then lowered.
 - Half-mast situations are normally declared by Executive Order (National or State). Individuals should not decide on their own to fly flags at half-mast.
- Flying the US flag upside down is a signal of distress.
- The flag on a pole should be **directly** illuminated at night.
- The flag should never be allowed to touch the ground.
- Tattered and damaged flags should be retired in a proper ceremonial method. Traditionally the BSA is one of the organizations that conduct these ceremonies.
- When displayed either horizontally or vertically against a wall, the union (blue field) should be uppermost and to the flag's own right, that is, to the observer's left. When displayed in a window, the US flag should be displayed in the same way, with the union to the left of the observer in the street. No other flag or pennant should be placed above, or, if on the same level, to the right of the US flag.

Flag Folding

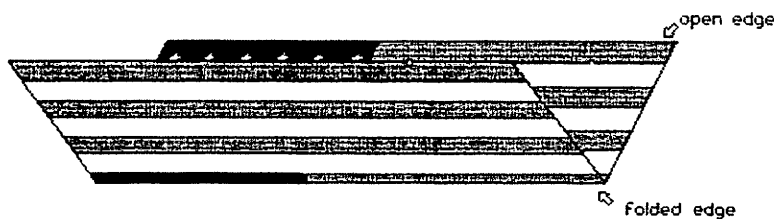
As an Army and Navy custom, the flag is lowered daily at the last note of retreat. Special care should be taken that no part of the flag touches the ground. The Flag is then carefully folded into the shape of a tri-cornered hat, emblematic of the hats worn by colonial soldiers during the war for Independence. In the folding, the red and white stripes are finally wrapped into the blue, as the light of day vanishes into the darkness of night. This custom of special folding is reserved for the United States Flag alone.

Step 1



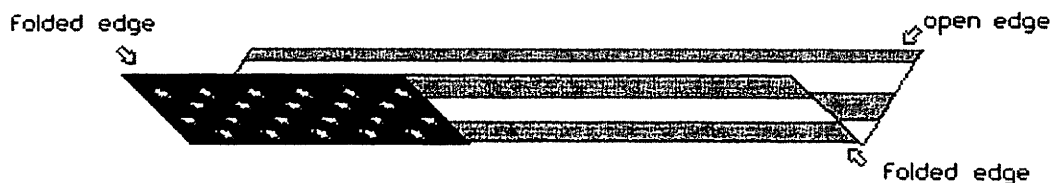
After lowering from a flag pole and unhooking from the fasteners, to properly fold the Flag, begin by holding it waist-high and taut with another person so that its surface is parallel to the ground. (Three color guard members is ideal - 1 at each end and 1 in the middle with arms outstretched **under the flag**, moving along as it is folded to catch it if it slips).

Step 2



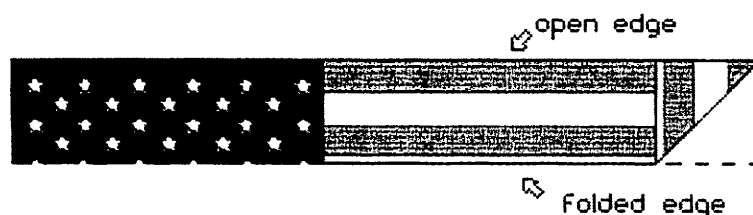
Fold the lower half of the stripe section lengthwise over the field of stars, holding the bottom and top edges securely.

Step 3



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

Step 4



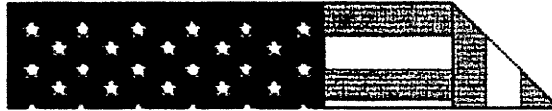
Make a triangular fold by bringing the striped corner of the folded edge to meet the open (top) edge of the flag.

Step 5



Turn the outer (end) 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. Sometimes, if not folded tightly, a bit of the grommet edge may be remaining. If so, tuck that part of the flag into the triangle.

Flag Raising Script

This is a basic outdoor flag raising script that can be adapted for the venue.

Equipment / Preparation

1 Standard size folded American Flag

1 Standard Flag pole

Four People in **Complete Field Uniform** (One is the Leader, the other three are the Color Guard. Color guard should practice and be able to walk in step)

Script

(before starting ceremony, the leader should position himself/herself at front of the audience near the flag pole and the color guard should be off to the side or behind the audience)

Leader: Color Guard, Attention!

when commanding the color guard, say the word "attention" in an authoritative way... "Aaa-tennnn-TION!!!!" – this will help the audience realize that the flag ceremony is starting. Everyone in audience comes to an attention stance

Leader: Color Guard, Forward March!

Color Guard moves forward towards the flag pole at a dignified pace with uniform steps starting with the **left foot** until next command is given. Person carrying the folded US flag is in front of line or in center of 3 abreast.

Leader: Color Guard, Halt!

Color Guard steps with left foot then stops on right step.

Leader: Prepare to Raise the Colors!

Color Guard separates to prepare the flag pole and to unfold the flag. One person should be designated the Pole Runner to prepare the flag pole (untie halyard, ready flag clips) while the remaining two or three people completely unfold the flag making sure it does not touch the ground. The person holding the Stars end should clip on the flag with the top clip first and work down until all clips are attached and, while holding the flag off the ground, wait for next command.

Leader: Raise the Colors, Scout Hand Salute!

Everyone except color guard salutes the Flag as it is raised (if music is played, the Pole Runner should wait until the music begins before raising the flag). The Pole Runner raises the flag quickly on the halyard and, as soon as the flag is in no danger of touching the ground, everyone in the color guard except the Pole Runner should salute. When Pole Runner is finished and has secured the flag pole he/she returns to the color guard line and salutes also.

Leader: Two

If music is played, this command should not be given until the music has ended

Leader: Color Guard, About Face!

Color Guard should turn in a clockwise rotation with one swift movement so they are facing back towards the Leader/audience

Leader: Color Guard, Forward March!

Once again, Color Guard starts with the left foot and marches at a uniform pace with uniform steps back to the Leader until next command is given

Leader: Color Guard, Halt!

Color Guard once again steps with left foot then comes to stop

Leader: Color Guard, About Face!

Once again Color Guard turns clockwise in one swift movement to face the Flag Pole.

Leader: At-Ease

Everyone returns to an at-ease stance.

NOTE – retiring the colors is basically this in reverse with slight verbiage changes ("lower the colors") and the folding.