

North Carolina State Government Flag Guide



About this Guide

This guide is designed to direct state agencies regarding the flying of the North Carolina and United States flags on state-owned buildings or properties. It also may be used by citizens who wish to make informed decisions about flying flags on private property.¹ The protocols for flying the flags at state facilities are a combination of state and federal statutes and policies.

In this guide you will find:

- Flag Display Guidelines for Internal and External Use
- Processions
- Flying Flags at Half-Staff- Authority, Protocol and Notifications
- Proper Disposal
- Flag Orders

¹[U.S. Flag Code, Chapter 1, Statute 5: Display and use of flag by civilians; codification of rules and customs; definition](#)

Displaying Flags

The United States and North Carolina flag must be flown each day, and especially on all state and federal holidays.²

For External Display

It is custom to display the United States and North Carolina flags only from sunrise to sunset on state buildings and stationary flagstuffs in front of state buildings. However, when a patriotic effect is desired, the flags may be displayed 24-hours a day if properly illuminated during the hours of darkness.³

Neither the United States nor the North Carolina flag should be displayed in inclement weather unless an all-weather flag is used.⁴

The North Carolina flag should never be placed above the United States flag; if on the same level, the North Carolina flag should be placed to the right of the United States flag.⁵

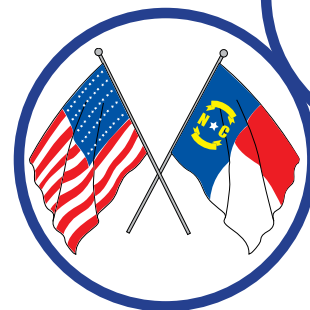
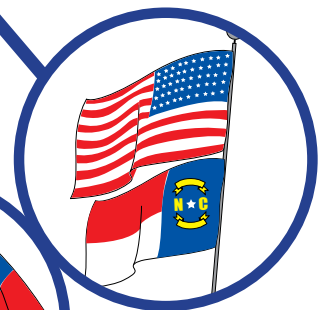
When the North Carolina flag is flown on the same halyard with the United States flag, it should always be under the national flag. When the North Carolina flag is flown from adjacent staffs, the United States flag should always be hoisted first and lowered last.⁶

For Internal Display

When the North Carolina flag is displayed with the United States flag against a wall from crossed staffs, the North Carolina flag should be on the left (the NC flag's own left), and its staff should be behind the staff of the United States flag.⁷

Processions

The North Carolina flag, when carried in a procession with the United States flag, should be on the marching left; that is, to the left of the United States flag.⁸



² [U.S. Flag Code, Chapter 1, Statute 6\(d\): Time and occasions for display](#)

³ [U.S. Flag Code, Chapter 1, Statute 6\(a\): Time and occasions for display](#)

⁴ [U.S. Flag Code, Chapter 1, Statute 6\(c\): Time and occasions for display](#)

⁵ [U.S. Flag Code, Chapter 1, Statute 7\(c\): Position and manner of display](#)

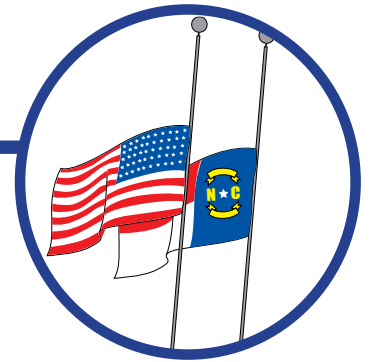
⁶ [U.S. Flag Code, Chapter 1, Statute 7\(f\): Position and manner of display](#)

⁷ [U.S. Flag Code, Chapter 1, Statute 7\(d\): Position and manner of display](#)

⁸ [U.S. Flag Code, Chapter 1, Statute 7: Position and manner of display](#)

Flying Flags at Half-Staff

President and Governor Authority



Flags may be flown at half-staff by Presidential proclamation or by the Governor's order for government properties. Only the President of the United States and Governors of states, territories or possessions have the authority to issue such proclamations and orders. The President has authority to lower flags on all buildings, grounds, and naval vessels of the federal government. The Governor has authority over all flags at North Carolina facilities. In this capacity, the Governor may order the flags at state facilities to be flown at half-staff.⁹

Annual Half-Staff Proclamations

Each year, flags are lowered to half-staff for the following observances.

- National Firefighters Memorial Day, First Sunday in May (sunrise to sunset)
- Peace Officers Memorial Day, May 15 (sunrise to sunset)
- Memorial Day, Last Monday in May (sunrise to 12 noon)
- Patriot Day, September 11 (sunrise to sunset)
- Pearl Harbor Day, December 7 (sunrise to sunset)

Protocol for Flying Flags at Half-Staff

The duration that flags shall be displayed at half-staff shall be determined by the Presidential proclamation or Governor's order, or in the absence of any order or instruction, as defined in the U.S. Flag Code.¹⁰

The flag of the state of North Carolina shall be displayed at half-staff for the same period as the flag of the United States.

At no time shall an order be given that would result in the flag of the state of North Carolina being displayed in a manner inconsistent with the various policies governing the display of both the United States and North Carolina flags. As an example, since no flag may ever be flown above the flag of the United States, it shall never be possible for the flag of North Carolina to be displayed at full staff while the United States flag is at half-staff.¹¹

The above North Carolina State Flag policy will always apply unless otherwise

Photo by Joshua Hoehne on Unsplash

⁹ [U.S. Flag Code, Chapter 1, Statute 7\(m\): Position and manner of display](#)

¹⁰ [PROC. No. 3044. Display of Flag at Half-Staff Upon Death of Certain Officials and Former Officials](#)

¹¹ [U.S. Flag Code, Chapter 1, Statute 7\(c\): Position and manner of display](#)

¹² [U.S. Flag Code, Chapter 1, Statute 7\(m\): Position and manner of display](#)

ordered by the President of the United States or the Governor of North Carolina. 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 again be raised to the peak before it is lowered for the day.¹²

Half-Staff Notifications/Alerts

Any communications to be sent throughout the state regarding the lowering of flags to half-staff will be managed by the NC Department of Administration in the following manner:

Upon receipt of an order from the Governor, the Secretary of Administration shall notify the members of the Governor's Cabinet and selected state agencies. The list shall be maintained by the Department of Administration. State agencies not contacted by the Secretary of Administration shall be notified by their respective cabinet member.

A decision to fly the flag or flags at half-staff throughout the state shall be made known to the public by website, social media or via email from the North Carolina Flag Alert Listserv. To receive notifications, visit the North Carolina Flag Alert [Registration page](#) to subscribe.

All such orders to fly the flag at half-staff will be issued by the Governor in written form indicating the occasion being observed, the flag(s) to be lowered (North Carolina or North Carolina and United States), and the length of time the flag(s) should be at half-staff. In the absence of the Governor, the Secretary of Administration will issue such orders.

Special Circumstances

State and Federal Holidays

For state government agencies, whenever the public holiday falls on Sunday, the following Monday is the public holiday.

Local Governments and Municipalities

Local government officials may also lower the United States and North Carolina flag on local government buildings upon the death of a current or former locally elected official (i.e., former mayor, city councilmember, etc.).¹³

¹³ [PROC. No. 3044. Display of Flag at Half-Staff Upon Death of Certain Officials and Former Officials](#)

¹⁴ [North Carolina General Statute 143-345.9: Official "Prisoner of War/Missing in Action" flag to be flown over the State Capitol](#)

¹⁵ [U.S. Flag Code, Chapter 1, Statute 8\(k\): Respect for flag](#)

POW/MIA Flag

In honor of their service and in remembrance of their sacrifice, the Department of Administration is authorized by statute to fly the official “Prisoner of War/Missing in Action (POW/MIA)” flag over the State Capitol.¹⁴

Proper Flag Disposal

Dry cleaning a soiled flag is not prohibited, but when it is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display it should be destroyed in a dignified manner, preferably by burning. Many veterans’ and scouting organizations collect tattered flags for ceremonial disposal.¹⁵

How to Order a Flag

A United States and/ or North Carolina flag may be ordered from the NC Department of Administration’s Division of Facility Management. The flag request form can be accessed [here](#).

For inquiries or to request additional information, please visit the Division of Facility Management’s [website](#) or call 919-733-3514 for details.