

# FLAG PROTOCOLS

## Background

School Administrator(s) and appropriate Division Office personnel shall ensure that the Canadian flag and the Alberta flag are displayed at schools and other Division facilities.

## Definitions

The **National Flag of Canada**, commonly referred to as the “Canadian flag,” is a red flag, twice as long as it is wide. In its centre is a white square the width of the flag, with a single red maple leaf in the centre of the square. The National Flag of Canada is considered a senior flag to all other flags, with the exception of the Vice-Regal Standard (flag of the Lieutenant Governor).

A **senior flag** is a flag that carries a higher status in the protocol for flag displays. For example, the National Flag of Canada is always the senior flag to a provincial flag.

A **special flag** is a rectangular piece of fabric bearing a symbol, logo or message, and is often used to celebrate or recognize a specific event, group or place. Special flags are not senior to the National Flag of Canada or provincial flags. Examples of special flags are the Treaty 6 flag, Métis flag, and the Pride flag.

The **flying** of a flag refers to the hanging of a flag from a flagpole outdoors.

The **displaying** of a flag refers to the hanging of a flag indoors, from a standing flagpole, from a flagstaff, or flat against a wall.

## Procedures

### 1. Responsibility

#### 1.1 The School Administrator(s) are responsible for:

- 1.1.1 ensuring the National Flag of Canada is flown on its own flagpole outside of the school;
- 1.2.1 ensuring the Flag of Alberta is either flown outdoors on a separate flagpole alongside the National Flag of Canada, or appropriately displayed indoors at the school;
- 1.3.1 ensuring the National Flag of Canada flag is raised and disposed of in alignment with national practices and protocols;
- 1.4.1 ensuring any flag flown or displayed at the school is maintained in good condition; and
- 1.5.1 ensuring the appropriate disposal of any flag or special flag.

#### 1.2 The Communications Officer, upon direction from the Superintendent, is responsible for sending out notices to schools and Division buildings regarding the lowering of outdoor flags to half-mast, and then raising and returning them to the original position after the event has ended.

## 2. Procedures from the Regulation

### 2.1 Flying and Displaying the National Flag of Canada

- 2.1.1 The National Flag of Canada shall be displayed only in a respectful manner; it shall not be subjected to indignity or displayed in a position inferior to any other flag or ensign.
- 2.1.2 The National Flag of Canada shall be flown on its own flagpole. Government of Canada flag protocol states that it is improper to fly two (2) or more flags on the same flagpole or mast.
- 2.1.3 The National Flag of Canada, flown outdoors at schools and Division buildings, shall be in good condition, and not be weathered, faded or tattered.
- 2.1.4 The National Flag of Canada shall be flown during the entire year, including general holidays.
- 2.1.5 The National Flag of Canada shall be flown outdoors on a flagpole and may be displayed indoors on a flagpole, flagstaff or flat against a wall.
  - a) When displayed horizontally on a flat surface, the flag is displayed with the leaf up and stem down.
  - b) When displayed or hung vertically, the flag should be placed so the upper part of the leaf points to the left and the stem points to the right, from the observer's point of view.
  - c) On a flagpole, the flag should be raised as closely to the top as possible.
- 2.1.6 If the National Flag of Canada is displayed on a platform of an auditorium, it should be against the wall or on a flagpole on the left, from the point of view of the audience.
- 2.1.7 Other ways of displaying the National Flag of Canada for ceremonial purposes, such as displaying the flag on a screen through electronic means, shall follow the same protocols to honour the National Flag of Canada.
- 2.1.8 The National Flag of Canada may be displayed in a classroom if it is done so respectfully and in a position of prominence.
- 2.1.9 When a National Flag of Canada becomes weathered, faded or tattered and is no longer suitable for use, it should be destroyed in a dignified way. Check with the government *Disposal of the National Flag of Canada* website prior to disposal.

### 2.2 Flying Flags Outdoors

- 2.2.1 All schools shall fly the National Flag of Canada outdoors on its own flagpole.
- 2.2.2 If a school or other Division building has more than one (1) flagpole outside, the order of precedence for flying flags is:
  - a) the National Flag of Canada;
  - b) the Flag of Alberta; then
  - c) other flags, in order of seniority.
- 2.2.3 When flying more than one (1) flag, the flags should be approximately the same size and shall be flown from separate flagpoles at the same height. The National Flag of Canada should be flown to the left, as seen by observers facing the building.
- 2.2.4 When three (3) flags are flown together, the National Flag of Canada occupies the central position, with the flag of Alberta to the left and third flag to the right, as seen by observers facing the building.

- 2.2.5 When more than one (1) flag is flown and it is not possible to hoist or lower them at the same time, the National Flag of Canada should be hoisted first and lowered last.

### 2.3 Flying a Flag at Half-Mast

- 2.3.1 The half-masting of the National Flag of Canada is a well-established practice to honour and express a collective sense of sorrow. If the National Flag of Canada is lowered to half-mast, all other flags flying outdoors will also be lowered to half-mast.
- 2.3.2 The Superintendent or designate will provide direction to the Division regarding the lowering of flags to half-mast. The Superintendent will receive direction on lowering flags through Alberta Education at the direction of the Prime Minister's Office through Canadian Heritage, or the Premier's Office through the Alberta Protocol Office.
- 2.3.3 At the discretion of the School Administrator(s) and in consultation with the Superintendent or designate, a flag may be flown outdoors at half-mast at the school on the death of a student or staff member, or individual associated with the school or community.
- 2.3.4 On Victoria Day and Canada Day, the National Flag of Canada cannot be flown at half-mast, with the exception of the death of the monarch, the Prime Minister or the Governor General.
- 2.3.5 When the flag is raised to the half-mast position or lowered from it, it is first raised to full-mast and then lowered to half-mast.
- 2.3.6 Flags shall be lowered to half-mast when it is reasonable and safe to do so.
- 2.3.7 Flags shall be raised back to full-mast when it is reasonable and safe to do so.

### 2.4 Displaying of Flags Indoors

- 2.4.1 Special flags may be displayed with senior flags such as the National Flag of Canada or the Flag of Alberta, if the order for precedence is observed.
- 2.4.2 Flags may be displayed indoors in schools, either horizontally or vertically, on an indoor flagpole, flagstaff or flat against a wall.
- 2.4.3 Flags displayed indoors shall be in good condition, and not weathered, faded or tattered. The same respectful disposal protocol used for the National Flag of Canada shall be used for other flags.
- 2.4.4 Flags may be displayed in classrooms for educational purposes if they are displayed respectfully.

**Reference:** Canadian and Provincial Flag Etiquette  
Canada National Flag of Canada Half-masting notices  
Disposal of the National Flag of Canada  
Education Act, sections 58(1), 61  
Flag Etiquette Government of Alberta  
National Flag of Canada etiquette  
Protocol for Flag Displays Government of Alberta  
Rules for half-masting the National Flag of Canada  
Rules for flying the National Flag of Canada