



CITY OF HOUSTON

Administrative Procedure

Subject: **Display of Flags**

A.P. No:

7-2 Revised

Effective Date:

10/15/2010

1. AUTHORITY

- 1.1 United State Code, Title 4, Chapter 1, Section 6 (d).

2. PURPOSE

- 2.1 To establish uniform policy and procedure for the display and handling of the United States (U.S.), State of Texas and City of Houston flags on City property.

3. OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 To provide departments/divisions guidelines for the routine display of flags and for half-staffing flags at times of mourning.
- 3.2 To provide departments/divisions uniform procedures for how to raise, lower, staff and care for flags.

4. DEFINITIONS

Raising flags - hoisting the flag to full staff.

Lowering flags - lowering the flag for removal and storage.

Half-staffing - lowering the flag from full staff to half staff.

City property - Buildings owned and/or operated by the City for business or public events, and City parks and greens with the capacity for flying flags on flagpoles.

5. SCOPE

- 5.1 This procedure is applicable to all departments/divisions with the capability of displaying flags on flagpoles.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 6.1 The General Services Department (GSD) is responsible for establishing and disseminating guidelines for the display of flags, for notifying departments of occasions of mourning which require half -staffing, and for making final decisions regarding the display

Approved:

Date Approved:

10/15/2010

Page 1 of 4

of flags. Appendix A lists the criteria for half-staffing.

- 6.2 Department Directors are responsible for the routine raising and lowering of flags, as well as half-staffing as required in this procedure.
- 6.3 Department Directors are responsible for notifying GSD of the death of an employee in the line of duty, so that half-staffing will be done at City Hall and other city locations as appropriate. As a courtesy, the department will promptly inform the Mayor and City Council about the death.

7. PROCEDURES

- 7.1 Display of the flag will be governed by these general guidelines:
 - 7.1.1 The flag will be flown on all City flagstuffs except at warehouses or in other places where it is impractical.
 - 7.1.2 Flags will generally be flown between the hours of sunrise and sunset. The exact time can be determined taking into consideration the office hours and the work schedule of the available manpower.
 - 7.1.3 Normal Working Days - The flags are normally flown on all workdays including Saturdays, if work is regularly performed in the building on that day.
 - 7.1.4 Holidays - The flags should be flown on holidays as directed by the United States Code, Title 4, Chapter 1, Section 6(d). Sufficient personnel should be scheduled for duty for the purpose of raising and lowering the flags.
 - 7.1.5 Inclement Weather - The flag may be displayed on days when the weather is inclement provided flags are of the all-weather flag type. The flags should not be flown during conditions such as high winds, severe storms and icy conditions, which could damage the flags or be hazardous to the handler. In such situations the flags should not be raised or should be removed in advance of severe weather conditions if possible.
 - 7.1.6 Locations displaying flags 24 hours a day - Flags shall be illuminated during the hours of darkness.
- 7.2 To raise flags the procedure is as follows:
 - 7.2.1 Loosen the halyard (rope, chain, etc.).
 - 7.2.2 Attach the flag by the grommet to the appropriate snap ensuring the following:
 - 7.2.2.1 The field of blue is at the top of the flag (U.S. flag);
 - 7.2.2.2 White stripe is at the top and star is standing (State of Texas flag);
 - 7.2.2.3 Seal of flag is in upright position (City of Houston flag);
 - 7.2.2.4 Pay careful attention not to allow the flag to touch the ground or floor;
 - 7.2.2.5 Raise the flag briskly and smoothly to the top of the staff.
- 7.3 When the flag has been raised to the top of the staff, fasten the halyard securely to the cleat or other device provided for this purpose.
- 7.4 Stand back and observe that the flag is properly flying at the top of the staff.

7.5 To lower flags - the procedure is as follows:

7.5.1 Unfasten the halyard and lower the flag slowly, catching it with the arm, being careful not to allow the flag to touch the ground or floor.

7.5.2 When the flag is down, remove from the snaps and secure the halyard to the cleat.

7.5.3 If the flag is dry, fold or roll it carefully and put it in storage.

7.5.4 If the flag is wet, hang it carefully to dry and when dry, fold or roll it carefully and put it in storage.

7.6 To half-staff flags - the procedure is as follows:

7.6.1 Hoist the flag briskly to the peak of the staff.

7.6.2 Lower the flag slowly to half-staff.

7.6.3 In lowering the flag for half-staff at the close of the day raise it to the peak; then lower it slowly to the bottom of the staff being careful not to allow the flag to touch the ground or floor.

7.7 To display multiple flags - follow these guidelines:

7.7.1 The U.S. flag goes to its own right and is hoisted before the other flags (State, City, Pennants).

7.7.2 Other flags and pennants when flown on the same staff with the U.S. flag shall not be larger than and shall be beneath the U.S. flag.

7.8 Caring for flags and flagpoles

7.8.1 Handle flags with respect and keep them clear of the ground or floor.

7.8.2 Display, fold and store flags so as to protect them from soil, damage or abuse.

7.8.3 When flags are in such condition that they are no longer a fit emblem for display, they should be forwarded to the Honor Guard at the Houston Police Department for proper disposal.

7.8.4 To maintain electronically equipped flagpoles, inspect poles regularly to ensure that the raising and lowering mechanisms are functional and that the photocells are in proper working order to ensure that the flags are raised and lowered automatically.

8. APPENDIX A – Display of Flag - Half-staff

8.1 The term half-staff means the position of the flag when it is one-half the distance between the top and bottom of the staff.

8.2 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. On Memorial Day, the flag should be displayed at half-staff until noon only, and then raised to the top of the staff. 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 a State, territory, or possession, as a mark of respect to their memory. In the event of the death of other officials or foreign dignitaries, the flag is to be

displayed at half-staff according to Presidential instructions or orders, or in accordance with recognized customs or practices not inconsistent with law. In the event of the death of a present or former official of the government of any State, territory, or possession of the United States, the Governor of that State, territory, or possession may proclaim that the National flag shall be flown at half-staff. The flag shall be flown at half-staff thirty days from the death of the President or a former President; ten days from the day of death of the Vice President, the Chief Justice or a retired Chief Justice of the United States, or the Speaker of the House of Representatives; from the day of death until interment of an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, a Secretary of an executive or military department, a former Vice President, or the Governor of a State, territory, or possession; and on the day of death and the following day for a Member of Congress.

- 8.3 Any rule or custom pertaining to the display of the flag of the United States of America, set forth herein, may be altered, modified, or repealed, or additional rules with respect thereto may be prescribed, by the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the United States, whenever he deems it to be appropriate or desirable; and any such alteration or additional rule shall be set forth in a proclamation.

(Information for Appendix A extracted from the Title 36, Chapter 10 of the U.S. Flag Code)