

Alaska State Legislature

Date: June 14, 2010 ~ Flag Day



Alaska's Flag Etiquette

**Initiated by the A. J. Dimond High School
Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps**

**in cooperation with
Representative Craig Johnson
Senator Lesil McGuire
Representative Mia Costello**



Alaska's Flag

Words by Marie Drake and music by Elinor Dusenbury

Eight stars of gold on a field of blue—
Alaska's flag. May it mean to you
The blue of the sea, the evening sky,
The mountain lakes, and the flow'rs nearby;
The gold of the early sourdough's dreams,
The precious gold of the hills and streams;
The brilliant stars in the northern sky,
The "Bear" —the "Dipper"— and, shining high,
The great North Star with its steady light,
O'er land and sea a beacon bright.
Alaska's flag—to Alaskans dear,
The simple flag of a last frontier.

Words and Music to
Alaska's Flag: Copyright 1985
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History of the Alaska Flag Project

As part of JROTC curriculum, “Service Learning Project”, the cadets of the A. J. Dimond High School Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (JROTC) Program realized there were several issues concerning the handling of Alaska’s state flag. While doing research during the 2009 school year for a flag retirement ceremony JROTC became aware of omissions from state statutes governing Alaska’s flag. The following three items are recommended for inclusion in statute:

1. There is no proper method stipulated for displaying the flag against a wall. This has caused a great deal of confusion and non-uniformity in how institutions are displaying the flag. This lack of guidance has resulted in a random and inconsistent manner of display that shows no respect to our state flag.
2. Since there is no proper method stipulated for folding the flag, they opted to fold our state flag in a rectangle. Part of the motivation is a passionate belief in the uniqueness of Alaska and a desire to reflect that distinctiveness in how we fold our flag. After much trial and error, they developed a technique that is neither complicated or cumbersome and yet, when done properly, results with the North Star – the defining emblem of our state – being displayed on top of the flag when it is presented to another.
3. The manner of retirement needed more ceremony. They felt that it should be encouraged that retirement of the state flag be a public ceremony under the direction of uniformed personnel representing a state or national military service or a patriotic society. However, as in the current statute, the state flag may be retired in a private ceremony.



Just as the United States has a thorough flag code, this booklet proposes putting in a more valid and descriptive flag etiquette code for the State of Alaska.

This in turn would remedy the confusion of how to display the state flag in numerous situations, fold the flag and dispose of a flag to create uniformity throughout our public and governmental institutions.

The local chain of command for this project is:

- Senior Army Instructor MSG Shelley, LET 2s, 3s & 4s
- Army Instructor MSG Watts, LET 2s & 3s
- Army Instructor SFC Ortiz, LET 1s
- And the Battalion Command Students

Eight Stars of Gold: The Story of Alaska's Flag

"The story of Alaska's flag is a unique and important part of 20th century Americana. What began in 1927 as a flag design contest resulted in the remarkable story of 13-year old Benny Benson and how his winning entry provided a flag for Alaska and a symbol of independence during the statehood campaign. Benny's design was simple yet elegant: eight stars of gold in the shape of the Ursa Major constellation (the Big Dipper) set against a deep blue backdrop representing Alaska's sky and forget-me-not flower. Benny's creation helped designate the forget-me-not as the Alaska state flower. This inspired Marie Drake to write a poem and, later, Elinor Dusenbury to set it to music and create Alaska's official song: Alaska's Flag."

India Spartz, Guest Curator
Alaska State Museums



DISPLAY STATE FLAG MOUNTED ON FLAGSTAFF

- (a) If the state flag is mounted on a flagstaff:
 - (1) the flag should be attached at the peak of the staff;
 - (2) the staff should be at least 2-1/2 times as long as the flag's hoist; and
 - (3) if the staff has a finial, the finial should be a spear-head or a spade.
- (b) If the state flag is permanently mounted on a flagstaff:
 - (1) the flag may be decorated with gold fringe.

DISPLAY OUTDOORS

- (a) The state flag should not normally be displayed outdoors before sunrise or after sunset.
- (b) For patriotic effect, the state flag may be displayed outdoors:
 - (1) 24 hours a day, if properly illuminated during darkness; or
 - (2) in the same circumstances that the flag of the United States may be displayed.
- (c) The flag of the United States and the flag of the State of Alaska shall be displayed daily, weather permitting, in the following places:
 - (1) on or near the main administration building of every institution under the authority or control of the state government;
 - (2) in or near every schoolhouse during school days.

DISPLAY ON FLAGPOLE OR FLAGSTAFF WITH OTHER FLAG: IN GENERAL

- (a) A flag or pennant, other than the flag of the United States, displayed with the state flag:
 - (1) should not be above the state flag; or
 - (2) if the other flag or pennant is at the same height as the state flag, it should not be, from the perspective of an observer, to the left of the state flag.



DISPLAY ON FLAGPOLE OR FLAGSTAFF WITH FLAG OF UNITED STATES

(a) If it is necessary for the state flag and the flag of the United States to be displayed on the same flagpole or flagstaff, the United States flag should be above the state flag.

(b) If the state flag and the flag of the United States are displayed on flagpoles or flagstaffs at the same location:

(1) the flags should be displayed on flagpoles or flagstaffs of the same height;

(2) the flags should be of approximately equal size;

(3) the flag of the United States should be, from the perspective of an observer, to the left of the state flag;

(4) the flag of the United States should be hoisted before the state flag is hoisted; and

(5) the state flag should be lowered before the flag of the United States is lowered.

DISPLAY ON FLAGPOLE OR FLAGSTAFF WITH FLAGS OF MUNICIPALITIES, OR LOCALITIES, OR ORGANIZATIONS

(a) If the state flag is displayed on a flagpole or flagstaff with a group of flags or pennants of municipalities, localities, or organizations that are displayed on flagpoles or flagstaffs, the state flag should be at the center and at the highest point of the group.

(b) If the state flag is displayed on the same halyard as a flag or pennant of a municipality, locality, or organization, the state flag should be at the peak.

(c) If the state flag and the flag or pennant of a municipality, locality, or organization are displayed on adjacent flagpoles or flagstaffs:

(1) the state flag should be to the left of the flag or pennant of the municipality, locality, or organization;

(2) the state flag should be hoisted before the flag or pennant of the municipality, locality, or organization is hoisted; and

(3) the flag or pennant of the municipality, locality, or organization should be lowered before the state flag is lowered.



**DISPLAY ON FLAGPOLE OR FLAGSTAFF WITH
FLAGS OF OTHER NATIONS, OR INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATIONS.**

(a) If the state flag is displayed with the flag of another of a nation other than the United States, or of an international organization:

(1) the nation's or international organization's flag should be to the left of the state flag;

(2) the state flag should not be above the other flag on the same flagpole or flagstaff or on a taller flagpole or flagstaff than the flagpole or flagstaff on which the other flag is displayed.

(b) This section does not apply to the United States, including the armed services, if federal custom or practice requires another manner of display.

**DISPLAY WITH OTHER FLAG ON
CROSSED FLAGSTAFFS**

(a) If the state flag is displayed with another flag, other than the flag of the United States, against a wall on crossed flagstaffs, the state flag should:

(1) be, from the perspective of an observer, to the left of the other flag; and

(2) have its flagstaff in front of the flagstaff of the other flag.

(b) If the state flag and the flag of the United States are displayed against a wall on crossed flagstaffs, the state flag should:

(1) be, from the perspective of an observer, to the right of the flag of the United States; and

(2) have its flagstaff behind the flagstaff of the United States flag.



DISPLAY ON FLAGPOLE OR FLAGSTAFF WITH FLAGS OF OTHER STATES

(a) If the state flag is displayed with the flag of another state of the United States the state flag:

(1) should be, from the perspective of an observer, to the left of the other flag on a separate flagpole or flagstaff.

DISPLAY HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL

(a) Horizontal display of the flag shows the North Star in the upper right corner

(b) Vertical display of the flag shows the hoist to the top and the North Star to the right of the observer's frontal view.

DISPLAY FROM OR IN A BUILDING

(a) If the state flag is displayed from a flagstaff that projects horizontally or at an angle from a building, the top of the flag should be placed at the peak of the staff unless the flag is at half staff.

(b) If the state flag is suspended over a sidewalk from a rope that extends from a building to a pole at the edge of a sidewalk, the flag should be hoisted from the building so the North Star is nearest to the pole.

(c) If the state flag is suspended across a corridor or lobby in a building that has only one main entrance, the flag should be suspended vertically with the hoist at the top and the North Star to the right of the observer entering the building. If the building has more than one main entrance, the state flag should be suspended vertically near the center of the corridor or lobby. If the entrances are on the east and west faces of the building, the North Star should be to the east. If the entrances are on the north and south faces of the building the North Star should be to the east. If the entrances on more than two faces of the building the North Star should be to the east.

(d) If the state flag is displayed in a window, the North Star should be on the right side from the perspective of an observer who is outside the window.



DISPLAY OVER A STREET

(a) If the state flag is displayed over a street, the flag should be suspended vertically with the hoist on top. If the street is an east-west street the North Star should be south. If the street is a north-south street the North Star should be east.

DISPLAY ON SPEAKER'S PLATFORM

- (a) If the state flag is displayed flat on a speaker's platform, the flag should be displayed above and behind the speaker.
- (b) If the state flag and the flag of the United States are displayed on a speaker's platform, the state flag should be, from the perspective of an observer, to the right of the United States flag.

DISPLAY ON A CASKET

- (a) If the state flag is used to cover a casket, the flag should be placed so that:
- (1) the hoist is at the head of the casket; and
 - (2) the North Star is over the left side of the casket looking head to toe.
- (b) The state flag should not be lowered in the grave or allowed to touch the ground.

CARRYING IN PROCESSION WITH OTHER FLAGS.

- (a) If the state flag is carried in a procession with another flag, other than the flag of the United States, the state flag should be on the marching right. If there is a line of other flags in the procession, the state flag should be in front of the center of that line.
- (b) If the flag of the United States is carried in a procession with the state flag, the flag of the United States should be on the marching right.



CARRYING OF STATE FLAG: IN GENERAL

(a) The state flag should, when practicable, be carried aloft and free, not flat or horizontally.

FOLDING THE STATE FLAG FOR PRESENTATION:

(a) When folding the state flag, the following procedure shall be followed, whenever possible:

(1) hold flag waist-high with an assistant, so that the flag is parallel to the ground and the hoist is on the left; the North Star in the upper right corner from an observer's view;

(2) fold the flag lengthwise with the open edge up;

(3) folding edges securely, rotate the flag so that five stars are facing up;

(4) fold the flag lengthwise a second time, with the open edge up;

(5) folding the edges securely, rotate the flag so that two stars are facing up;

(6) fold the flag widthwise, with the North Star facing down and the hoist on the right;

(7) holding the edges securely, fold the flag widthwise a second time, with the North Star facing down and the hoist on the right;

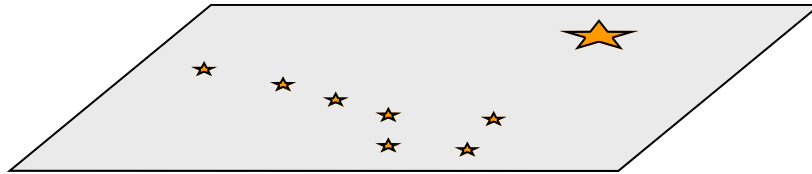
(8) fold the flag widthwise a third time, with the North Star facing up.

(b) When presenting the folded flag to another person, the folded flag should be turned so that the North Star is nearest the receiver.

(See Illustrations, pages 12 and 13)

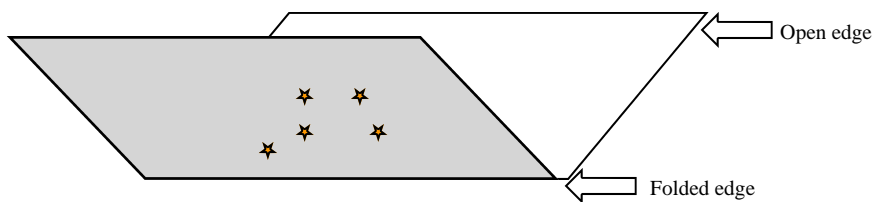


Step 1



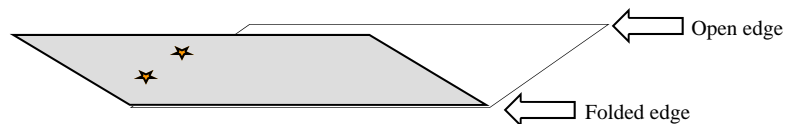
To properly fold the Flag, begin holding the flag waist-high with another person, so that the flag is parallel to the ground and the hoist is on the left; the North Star is in the upper right corner from the observer's frontal view.

Step 2



Fold the flag lengthwise with the open edge up. Holding edges securely, rotate the flag so that five stars are facing up.

Step 3

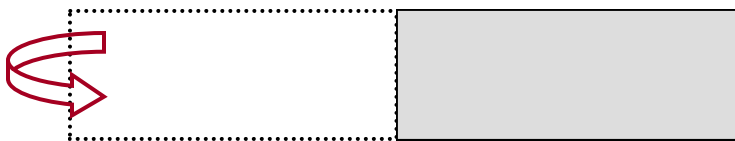


Fold the flag lengthwise a second time, with the open edge up. Holding the edges securely, rotate the flag so that two stars are facing up.

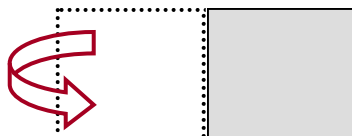


Steps 4, 5, 6 and 7

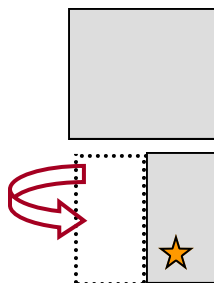
Fold the flag widthwise, with the North Star facing down and the hoist on the right.



Holding the edges securely, fold the flag widthwise a second time, with the North Star facing down and the hoist on the right.



Fold the flag widthwise a third time, with the North Star facing up.



When presenting the folded flag to another person, the folded flag should be turned so that the North Star is nearest the receiver.



DISPLAY LIMITATIONS

(a) The state flag should not:

- (1) touch anything beneath it, including the ground or floor;
- (2) be dipped to any person or thing, except as a mark of honor for the United States flag;
- (3) trail in water;
- (4) have placed on any part of it, or attached to it, any mark, word, figure, design, picture, device or drawing;
- (5) be used or stored in a manner in which it can easily be soiled or damaged;
- (6) be used as a receptacle for receiving, holding, carrying, or delivering anything;
- (7) be displayed on a float in a parade, except from a staff or in the manner provided by horizontal or vertical section of this statute
- (8) be draped over the hood, top, side, or back of any motor vehicle, train, boat, or aircraft;
- (9) be used as bedding, clothing, drapery or used as bunting;
- (10) be festooned or drawn back or up in folds, but instead allowed to fall free; or
- (11) be used as a covering for a ceiling.

(b) Advertising should not be fastened to a flagpole, flagstaff, or halyard on which the state flag is displayed.

STATE FLAG AS FEATURE OF UNVEILING CEREMONY

- (a) The state flag should form a distinctive feature of the ceremony of unveiling a statue or monument.
- (b) The state flag should not be used as the covering for the statue or monument.

HOISTING AND LOWERING; PASSING IN PARADE OR REVIEW

(a) The state flag should be hoisted briskly and lowered ceremoniously.

(b) During the ceremony of hoisting or lowering the state flag or if the flag is passing in a parade or in review:

(1) each citizen of this state who is present and not in uniform should:

(a) face the state flag and stand at attention with the person's right hand over the heart ; and

(b) if wearing a head covering that is easy to remove, remove the head covering with the right had and hold it at the person's left shoulder, with the person's hand over the heart;

(2) each person who is present and in uniform should make a military salute; and

(3) each person who is present but not a citizen of this state should stand at attention.

(c) The salute to the state flag in a moving column shall be made at the moment the state flag passes that person.

RETIREMENT OF STATE FLAG MANNER OF RETIREMENT

(a) If a state flag is no longer useful due to fading, damage or wear and tear it should be destroyed by burning, in a ceremony or dignified way that emphasizes its honor as a fitting symbol for this state.

(b) It is recommended that retirement of the state flag be a public ceremony under the direction of uniformed personnel representing a state or national military service or a patriotic society, but the state flag may be retired in a private ceremony.