

# Ceremonial Procedures



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Public Works and  
Government Services  
Canada

Travaux publics et  
Services gouvernementaux  
Canada

Canada



# Ceremonial Procedures

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A wide range of individuals planning ceremonial events will find this manual invaluable. It originated as a guide for the personnel of Public Works and Government Services Canada engaged in providing ceremonial support services to Government of Canada organizations, and has evolved as a living document containing detailed advice and practical tips for anyone engaged in arranging protocol or ceremony.

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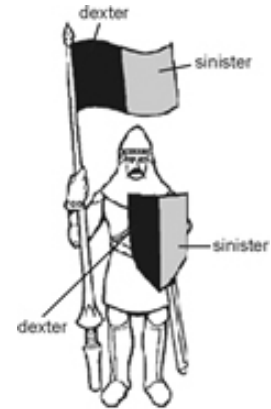
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# Ceremonial Procedures

## Introduction

Much of our present day protocol associated with flag display and ceremonial honours stems from the Middle Ages, but even earlier, in the Stone Age, our primitive ancestors employed symbols to denote their individual or group's relative position in society by employing animal skulls and birds' feathers to draw attention to their presence.

With the development of man-the-fighting-machine in the form of the armed knight, the complex but ordered system of heraldry evolved as a means of recognition on both the battlefield and tournament lists.



The still commonly used words **Coats of Arms**, **Crests**, **Pennants**, **Standards**, etc., were derived in that period. The present concept of the order of precedence for flag display can probably be associated with the fact that the right or **dexter** side of the knight's shield, which was the sword or lance arm side, was regarded as the senior side in terms of heraldic display of the devices born on the shield. Thus it was then from the point of view of an observer or opponent of that knight that the left side was the more important. So it is today when setting out flags for display that the first flag, in order of precedence, is usually placed on the left as viewed by the observer or audience and the remainder are to the right in descending order of precedence.

It is useful to think of that knight's shield as you consider the placement of flags on stages, along walls, in entrance ways or in outdoor displays. The first in order of precedence is always on the left as viewed by the observer.

Finally, we must be cognizant of the fact that although most of our ceremonial traditions reach far back in history, we must always be prepared for changes and improvements. A good example of this is the change of emphasis that has occurred in recent years since the introduction of the Canadian flag in 1965. As Canadians show ever increasing interest in this unique national symbol we, who are in the position of providing ceremonial support services, find more and more requests for larger and more frequent flag displays.

## The National Flag of Canada

The National Flag (or Canadian Flag) was adopted by Parliament on 22 October 1964, proclaimed by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on 28 January 1965, and officially hoisted on 15 February 1965.

It is a red flag of proportions one by width and two by length, containing in its centre a white square the width of the flag with a single red maple leaf centered therein (see [Appendix A](#)).

The National Flag may be flown by individuals and organizations at any time. It will be flown on all Federal Government owned, leased or lease-purchase buildings, airports, on all Canadian Forces bases and establishments, and worn at the ensign staff by all HMC Ships in commission and by all other vessels in the service of the Canadian Government.

The National Flag will, at all times, be treated with the dignity and respect warranted by this symbol of national sovereignty. With the exception of the Queen's Personal Canadian Flag, standards of the Royal Family, the Governor General's Flag or the flag of the Lieutenant Governor of a province within his/her province of jurisdiction, the National Flag will be flown or displayed in the position of honour before other flags.

### Method of Display

National Flags and any other flags flown or displayed by Public Works and Government Services Canada will be kept clean and in good repair. They will be hoisted close up to the mast head and flown freely from taut halyards.

The Flag may be displayed flat or flown from a staff or pole. If flat it may be hung horizontally or vertically as follows:

- **horizontally:** With the sleeve to the left as seen by the observer.
- **vertically:** With the sleeve upper-most and the top of the maple leaf pointing to the left.

No method of display shall allow the Flag to touch the ground or floor.

When the National Flag is displayed in the chancel of a church or chapel, it will be flown on the right of the clergy or speaker. When displayed in the body of the church, it will be on the right of the congregation or audience.

When displayed on a pole in connection with a meeting, the Flag should be displayed on the speaker's right or as viewed by the audience, to the left of the speaker. If displayed flat against the wall, it should be above and behind the speaker. The Flag shall not be used to cover the speaker's table or be draped in front of the platform.

The Flag may be used to unveil a plaque tablet or picture but the utmost care must be taken to prevent it from falling to the ground. It is preferable to use a piece of drapery material of suitable colour for this type of ceremony with a display of Flags set out in the area.

The National Flag should not be festooned over doorways and arches, tied in bows or fashioned into rosettes.

When displayed over the middle of the street, the Flag may be hung horizontally or vertically; if vertically, it is suggested that the top of the maple leaf points North on East/West streets and East on North/South streets.

**NOTE:** This convention follows the practice established in some other countries and is offered as a suggestion only.

When the National Flag is suspended from a rope extending from a building to a pole, the Flag should be hoisted out from the building toward the pole with the point of the maple leaf facing the pole.

### **Flown with Other Flags**

When flown with foreign national flags, the National Flag will take precedence. All flags shall be hoisted and lowered simultaneously. If this is not possible, the National Flag shall be hoisted first and lowered last. On occasions requiring that one flag be flown at half-mast, all flags should also be flown at half-mast.

No flag or banner shall be flown or displayed above the National Flag. When flown together, all flags should be approximately the same size and flown from poles or staffs the same height. (Exceptions to this rule are shown at Appendix G1, Figures [1](#), [2](#), [3](#) and [4](#), Poles Rigged with a Gaff or Yard.)

When flown or displayed with other flags, the National Flag will occupy the position of honour as follows:

- When two or more than three flags are flown together, the National Flag will be on the left as viewed from the front or from the position of the observer. The other flags will be displayed in descending order of precedence to the right (see Appendix B, Figures [1](#) and [3](#)).
- When three flags are flown together, the National Flag will occupy the central position with the next ranking flag to the left and the third ranking flag to the right as viewed by the spectator (see Appendix B, [Figure 2](#)).
- The National Flag may also be flown at each end of a line of flags (see Appendix B, [Figure 3](#)).
- On occasions when it is desired that the National Flag be placed in the centre of a

display, for example to be directly behind the principal person on a stage, the other flags should be set out left and right alternately as shown at Appendix C, [Figure 5](#).

When the National Flag and another flag are displayed together from crossed staffs against a wall, the National Flag will be on the left and the other on the right as viewed by the observer. The staff of the National Flag will be in front of the staff of the other flag (see Appendix B, [Figure 4](#)).

When a grouping of three flags is repeated such as for street lining the order of precedence changes from: centre, left, right as shown at Appendix B, [Figure 2](#), to left, centre, right, left, centre, right; or 1, 2, 3; 1, 2, 3, etc., as often as required (see Appendix E, [Figure 4](#)).

### **Destruction**

When a flag becomes worn, noticeably faded or otherwise unfit for service, it should be disposed of privately by burning. This international convention is in no way a sign of disrespect to the flag.

## Flags of the Canadian Provinces

The order of precedence for the flying of Provincial flags is according to the date of entry of the Province into Confederation. The sequence is:

1. Ontario 1867;
2. Quebec 1867;
3. Nova Scotia 1867;
4. New Brunswick 1867;
5. Manitoba 1870;
6. British Columbia 1871;
7. Prince Edward Island 1873;
8. Saskatchewan 1905;
9. Alberta 1905;
10. Newfoundland 1949. (Officially renamed to "Newfoundland and Labrador" in 2001.)

Flags of the three Territories are displayed in order of creation and follow those of the Provinces:

1. Northwest Territories 1870;
2. Yukon 1898;
3. Nunavut 1999.

When the Provincial flags are displayed, it is also customary to display a National Flag which should occupy the place of honour. It is quite correct to display a National Flag at each end of the line of Provincial flags if desired.

In situations where a host province is involved, that Province's flag should follow the National Flag in order of precedence.

[Appendix C1](#) illustrates the Provincial and Territorial Flags in order of precedence.

[Appendix C2](#) provides some sample Provincial Flag layouts. These are also applicable to foreign flag displays.



## Display of Foreign Flags

No foreign national flag shall be flown or displayed in a position superior to the National Flag.

The usual precedence for flying or displaying foreign national flags in Canada is alphabetically in the English language. When displaying flags for an event that is expressly French speaking such as an assembly of French speaking nations then the order of precedence will be alphabetically in the French language. Normally the National Flag will be flown first in order of precedence, then the other flags. See the [United Nations Web site](#) for a list of member countries.

Those countries which are not members of the United Nations such as Switzerland, The Vatican, etc., should be inserted in the order of precedence alphabetically.

Member nations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) can be obtained by visiting the [NATO Web site](#).

Countries of the Commonwealth can be obtained by visiting the [Commonwealth Web site](#).

Countries of the Organization of American States (OAS) can be obtained by visiting the [OAS Web site](#).

Countries of the Francophonie Nations can be obtained by visiting the L'Agence intergouvernementale de [la Francophonie Web site](#). (*in French only*)

When displaying or flying flags of several nations, all flags including the National Flag should be flown from the same height and be approximately the same size. The national specifications for foreign flags may be amended to approximate the National Flag, i.e., the Qatar Flag is 1.1 by width and 2.8 by length and the Swiss flag is 1 by 1. When manufactured for use in Canada, they are both made 1 by width and 2 by length.

Flags of two nations should not be simultaneously flown from the same pole as this normally represents domination or defeat of the lowermost by the uppermost. This is used in wartime to indicate the capture of an enemy ship.

**NOTE:** This does not apply to poles with gaff and/or yard rigs as shown in [Appendix G1](#).

When displaying foreign flags on interior oak poles or staffs, they should be mounted on those with a spearpoint or acorn finial, not the maple leaf finial. It is acceptable to use the maple leaf finial with the National Flag and Provincial flags but for displays including foreign flags it is preferable that all have the same spearpoint finial.

The general rules listed above for the display of the National Flag also apply to foreign flags.

Generally flags are ranked according to their political importance, i.e., national flags, provincial flags, city flags, followed by political, religious, educational, commercial, other institutional flags and rank flags. Thus, for example, the flag of the United Nations takes precedence over the rank flag of a military officer. It is suggested that where possible, displays involving mixing of the above, particularly the latter grouping, should be avoided whenever possible.

Some countries add a coat of arms to their flag to differentiate between the state flag and the civil flag (see [Appendix J](#), Glossary of Terms). Unfortunately the practice of using the state or civil flag as the national flag abroad is not internationally standardized.

The following countries use the state flag as the national flag abroad:

- Andorra
- Argentina
- Bolivia
- Costa Rica
- Dominican Republic
- Ecuador
- El Salvador
- Guatemala
- Haiti
- Nicaragua
- Peru
- San Marino
- Spain
- Venezuela

Countries where the national flag abroad is the civil flag are:

- Austria
- Denmark
- Ethiopia
- Finland
- Germany
- Iceland
- Monaco
- Norway
- Poland

Although flags are normally displayed horizontally, most foreign flags may be hung vertically if required. Some countries however require changes to be made so that the device on the flag is

shown in an upright manner. Should it be required to hang foreign flags vertically, the following guidelines apply:

- If the flags are displayed where only one side is visible: where there is a primary approach to the area where they are seen or where the majority of the spectators view the flags, they should all be hung, with the upper hoist corner, or toggle, to the upper left of the viewer.
- The flag of Liechtenstein should be specially made so that the device is seen in the upright position. This also applies to the state flags of Austria and Germany should they be required (see above list).

It is generally acceptable for silk screened flags which contain devices to have those emblems or words appear as mirror images on the reverse side of the flag. Exceptions are: Brazil, Paraguay and Saudi Arabia.

## Personal Flags and Standards

### The Royal Family

The Sovereign and members of the Royal Family are entitled to display personal flags and standards which are normally flown to denote their presence. Those flags and standards are flown day and night at any building in which they are in residence or in which they are attending a public function.

Generally, personal flags and standards are flown behind the saluting base when troops are inspected and on Her Majesty's ships when they are aboard.

Normally, personal flags and standards are broken (see "Miscellaneous Ceremonial Notes", below) from the flag pole as members of the Royal Family step on the saluting base or enter the building and are lowered as they leave. The saluting base flag pole must therefore be rigged with halyards.

Her Majesty's Personal Canadian Flag and standards of members of the Royal Family will take precedence before the National Flag.

Her Majesty's Personal Canadian Flag is never half-masted.

These flags and standards, like all personal flags, are never used by others.

For examples of Her Majesty's Personal Canadian Flag and some standards of the Royal Family, see Appendix D1, [Figures 1 to 4](#). The list is not complete.

Her Majesty has several standards and personal flags which are displayed according to the event and the location (country). In Canada, only Her Majesty's Personal Canadian Flag will be displayed to mark her presence. Her Majesty has a similar flag for Australia, New Zealand, Scotland, etc. HRH Prince Charles also has standards which are used geographically. The one displayed at Appendix D1, [Figure 3](#) is correct for use in Canada. These flags and standards are normally provided by the Household Staff and are loaned to the Department of Canadian Heritage visit staff prior to the visit.

Flags and standards of foreign monarchs or heads of state may be flown as the occasion demands but normally only the foreign national flag is flown in connection with a Head of State visit. The foreign national flag will take precedence after the National Flag. Precedence of foreign personal standards will be established by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade as required.

If more than one member of the Royal Family is present on an official visit, only the standard of the member senior in precedence shall be flown.

## **The Governor General's Flag**

The Governor General's Flag is shown at [Appendix D2](#). The same provisions specified for the Sovereign's flag and standards of members of the Royal Family apply to the Governor General's Flag.

## **Lieutenant Governors' Flags**

The flags of Lieutenant Governors within the Province of their jurisdiction are treated in a manner similar to the Governor General's Flag.

## **Distinguishing Flags**

Certain officers of the Canadian Armed Forces and the Canadian Coast Guard are entitled to fly Distinguishing Flags or Pennants within the recognized area limits of their command. It is unlikely that Public Works and Government Services Canada personnel will become involved in the flying of these flags.

## The Union Flag

The Union Flag commonly known as the **Union Jack** has a long history of usage in Canada dating back to the British settlement in Nova Scotia after 1621. Although the Red Ensign was widely used in Canada from the time of Confederation until the National Flag was flown in 1965, the Union Jack was the affirmed national symbol from 1904 and was the flag under which Canadian troops fought during World War I. The Union Jack maintains its presence in Canada through its incorporation in the Provincial flags of Ontario, Manitoba and British Columbia.

On 18 December 1964, Parliament approved the continued use of the Union Jack as a symbol of Canada's membership in the Commonwealth of Nations and allegiance to the Crown.

When flown or displayed in Canada and other Commonwealth nations, the Union Jack serves two purposes. First, it is the national flag of the United Kingdom and second, it is flown as a symbol of membership in the Commonwealth and allegiance to the Crown. The order of precedence of the Union Jack in relation to Provincial flags varies in accordance with the reason it is flown.

When representing the United Kingdom as a sovereign nation, the Union Jack takes precedence before a Canadian Provincial flag (see Appendix E, [Figure 1](#)).

When representing Canada's membership in the Commonwealth, for example during a Royal Visit, the Union Jack will take precedence after a Canadian Provincial flag (see Appendix E, [Figure 2](#)).

### Special Display

When the Union Jack is flown as part of the display of flags during a visit by Her Majesty the Queen or members of the Royal Family, the following rules will apply:

For Ottawa, three National Flags followed by a Union Jack will be displayed. This grouping applies to flags used for street lining and other displays. The rationale behind this is that instead of the usual National Flag, foreign flag, etc. (1, 2: 1, 2, etc.) sequence, these flags represent the following: Canada, the National Flag of the Queen of Canada, Canada, and the Union Jack for Canadian membership in the Commonwealth. Thus the sequence (1, 1, 1, 2: 1, 1, 1, 2 etc.), (see Appendix E, [Figure 3](#)).

Outside of Ottawa, the precedence will be one National Flag, one Provincial flag and one Union Jack. Here the Provincial flag takes precedence before the Union Jack which symbolizes Commonwealth membership (see Appendix E, [Figures 2 and 4](#)).

**NOTE:** The rule for streetlining and similar large flag displays as detailed in "The National Flag

of Canada" applies.

When the Union Jack is flown during a visit to Canada by a person representing the United Kingdom, the normal grouping of one National Flag and one Union Jack will be followed. On some occasions it may be deemed necessary to add a Provincial flag to the display. In this case, the Union Jack will take precedence before the Provincial flag as it represents the United Kingdom.

The Union Jack will, where physical arrangements make it possible, be flown along with the National Flag at federal buildings, airports, military bases and establishments within Canada, from sunrise to sunset, on the following occasions annually:

- the date of the official observance of Her Majesty the Queen's Birthday in May;
- the anniversary of the signing of the Statute of Westminster (11 December); and
- the date of the official observance of Commonwealth Day (usually the second Monday of March).

"Physical arrangements" means two flag poles. The National Flag will take precedence and will not be replaced by the Union Jack. Where only one pole exists, no arrangements shall be taken to erect an additional pole.

The Union Jack may be flown with the National Flag at the National War Memorial and at similarly appropriate federal locations in Canada in connection with ceremonies marking anniversaries of events in which Canadian forces participated with other Commonwealth forces.

### **Discretionary Authority**

Having regard to the Parliamentary approval concerning the continued use of the Union Jack in Canada, it is a matter of judgement for individuals and organizations to fly the Union Jack as deemed appropriate.

## **Funerals**

### **Mourning - Departmental Involvement**

On the death of the Sovereign, a member of the Royal Family, the Governor General, the Prime Minister, distinguished Canadians, certain foreign Heads of State, Heads of Government and other persons, Canada will enter into a state of mourning with varying degrees of participation. Funerals of distinguished persons buried in Canada may take the form of:

- a State Funeral;
- a Military Funeral; or
- a Private Funeral.

Public Works and Government Services Canada actively participates in the period of mourning prior to the funeral by Half-Masting Flags as prescribed by the Department of Canadian Heritage, and by assisting with the provision of ceremonial equipment and decoration for certain State and Military Funerals.

Response to the request for assistance must be quickly implemented and in view of the importance and visibility of the Department's participation, it must be correctly and tastefully effected. In cases where a distinguished person is known to be suffering from a terminal illness and it is expected that the Department will be called upon to support the funeral, it is essential that planning and preparation with other involved departments and agencies be carried out as early as possible.

### **Associated Activities**

In addition to half-masting flags, Public Works and Government Services Canada is heavily committed, particularly in the Ottawa area, to providing support to the Department of Canadian Heritage and other departments for other symbols of mourning associated with State Funerals. They may include:

- draping the coffin with the National Flag;
- draping archways, chambers and tables with black crape;
- providing wreath holders;
- carpeting;
- crowd control barriers, ropes and stanchions; and
- press risers and other platforms.

Other departments and agencies involved in the planning and implementation of state funerals are the following:

- Department of Canadian Heritage;
- Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade;



- Department of National Defence;
- Government House;
- Prime Minister's Office;
- The Sergeant-at-Arms - House of Commons;
- The Usher of the Black Rod - Senate;
- Provincial, Territorial and Municipal authorities as required;
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police;
- Municipal Police;
- The appropriate religious authorities; and
- Funeral director.

## **Half-Masting Flags**

The flying of flags at half-mast as a symbol of mourning appears to go back to a sixteenth century naval custom which has been adopted for use on land. Although its origins are obscure the custom is internationally practised.

While nothing precludes individuals and private organizations from flying the National Flag at half-mast as a sign of mourning, the procedures for the Federal Government follow a pattern prescribed by the Department of Canadian Heritage. These procedures will be described in detail in subsequent paragraphs.

The position of the Flag when flying at half-mast will depend on its size, the length of the flag pole and its location but as a general rule the centre of a flag should be exactly half-way down the pole. (See [Appendix F1](#)).

When hoisted to or lowered from the half-mast position, a flag will first be raised to the masthead then lowered.

When two or more flags are flown together, all flags will be half-masted.

Flags will only be half-masted on those flag poles fitted with halyards and pulleys. Some buildings fly flags from horizontal or angled poles, without halyards, to which flags are permanently attached. Flags on these will not be half-masted.

As a sign of mourning it is acceptable to attach a cravat to a flag on an interior pole which cannot be half-masted. (See Annex J - [Glossary of Terms](#).)

## **Exceptions**

During periods of half-masting, the Flag is raised to full mast on all federal buildings and establishments on Victoria Day and Canada Day.

The Peace Tower Flag will be hoisted to full mast while a Head of State or Head of Government visits Parliament Hill.

The procedures stated above do not apply for the death of the Sovereign when flags are only raised to full mast on the day on which the accession of the new Monarch is proclaimed.

The flag on all federal buildings and establishments will be flown at half-mast on these special occasions:

- 28 April - Workers Mourning Day;
- Last Sunday in September - Police and Peace Officers' National Memorial Day;
- 11 November - Remembrance Day; and
- 6 December - National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

### **Implementation**

The executive direction to half-mast flags on Federal Government property will be initiated by the Department of Canadian Heritage, via messages transmitted by Public Works and Government Services Canada's National Service Call Centre.

The half-masting of the Flag is a highly visible and sensitive act, as such it must be punctual and accurate. Care must be taken to avoid errors and omissions in its implementation.

### **Draping the National Flag on a Casket**

A 1.4 m x 2.7 m (4.5 foot x 9 foot) flag should be used to cover the casket. See [Appendix F2](#) for method of layout and placing of the wreath and personal accoutrements on the casket. It may be necessary to sew clips or fastenings or use two-sided tape on the underside of the flag to keep it from slipping off the casket. The flag is always removed from the casket before it is lowered into the ground.

### **Disposal of Half-Masted Flags**

The Flag that is flown at half-mast from the Peace Tower to honour the memory of a deceased person will be delivered to the Minister's Office the day following the funeral so that it may be presented to the next-of-kin.

Flags flown at half-mast from other Federal Government buildings may be presented to the next-of-kin when it is deemed appropriate.

## Flag Poles, Staffs and Masts

In the general sense, as they are related to Public Works and Government Services Canada operations, flag poles may be divided into three categories:

- Exterior Permanent Poles located on buildings or on the adjacent grounds;
- Exterior Portable Poles normally mounted on concrete or steel bases; and
- Interior Poles or staffs used for indoor flag display.

All poles used for a display should be the same height.

### Exterior Permanent Poles

The National Flag will be prominently displayed on all Federal Government Buildings. Generally, all buildings will require flag poles located on the ground or attached to them. These poles should be sited near the front entrance or on the roof. They should be fitted with a hoisting device such as a halyard and pulley arrangement to allow the flags to be easily changed and half-masted as required.

Flag size and pole length for building poles should correspond to the following dimensions:

Flag Size	Length of Pole
1 x 2 metres (3 x 6 feet)	5.5 to 6.5 metres (17 to 20 feet)
1.5 x 3 metres (4.5 x 9 feet)	9.5 to 11.5 metres (30 to 35 feet)
2 x 4 metres (6 x 12 feet)	13 to 14.75 metres (40 to 45 feet)
2.5 x 5 metres (7.5 x 15 feet)	16.25 metres (50 feet)

On occasion, the simple flag pole is fitted with a yardarm and/or gaff to augment the number of flags that may be flown from it. This practice is in imitation of a ship's mast and is normally found at naval establishments ashore. Care should be taken to ensure proper flag etiquette is followed when this type of pole is employed. For flag precedence, see Appendix G1, Figures [1](#), [2](#), [3](#) and [4](#).

### Exterior Portable Poles

In addition to building flag poles, it is a frequent ceremonial requirement to display flags out-of-doors on portable flag poles or staffs. Poles are normally from 3.5 metres to 6 metres (12 feet to 20 feet) in height with the former being the most commonly used. The poles may be made of wood or aluminium topped with a spearpoint or ball finial.

The display of flags out-of-doors necessitates that the base be either a fixed flag bracket on a building, a light standard base, or be installed in the ground, and that it be of sufficient weight and strength to withstand wind pressures applied against the flag and pole. [Appendix G2](#) illustrates recommended concrete and steel bases. These may be manufactured locally.

Regions should have at least one 6-metre (20 foot) pole with a pulley and halyard on which a Royal Flag, Standard or other flag may be broken during certain events such as Official Welcoming or Departure Ceremonies.

The distance between flag poles displayed out-of-doors will depend on the nature of the ceremony and availability of resources. It is suggested that on the average, poles should be 3 to 5 metres (10 to 15 feet) apart. On those occasions where exterior poles are used to display flags at entrances of buildings, they should be situated on each side of the doorway with approximately 2 metres (6 feet) between poles in the grouping.

### **Interior Poles**

Flags are frequently displayed indoors in support of visits by Heads of State, conferences, social events and other official functions. Displays are found in the main lobby of buildings or hotels, in conference rooms either against a wall, on a stage or behind the conference table and at dinners behind the head table. Flag groupings normally consist of the National Flag and that of the visiting individual's country (countries). Provincial flags are added from time to time at the discretion of the client department.

Distance between interior poles should, on the average, be between 30 to 60 cm (1 to 2 feet). The spacing between poles may be expanded to fill the available area when circumstances dictate.

## Miscellaneous Ceremonial Notes

### Breaking a Flag

Frequently it is desired that a flag be rigged on a pole in such a way that it pops open at a desired time. This entails folding, rolling and fastening the flag in such a way that a sharp tug on the halyard will cause it to unfurl. This is called breaking or breaking out a flag and it most often occurs with the arrival of a dignitary to a military parade or the breaking of a royal standard on a building as he or she enters. See [Appendix H1](#) for the correct way to prepare a flag for breaking.

### Folding the Flag

Although there is no official way the National Flag must be folded for presentation purposes, a suggested method is found at [Appendix H2](#). When folded in this uniquely Canadian way, a portion of the maple leaf shows. In Step 1 the Flag is "presented" by moving it from the horizontal to the vertical plane and is folded twice length-wise. The Flag is then rotated to the horizontal and the fly folded to the hoist twice. The critical point in the sequence occurs at Step 5 when the fly is folded under to the hoist so that the maple leaf remains visible. Two or more persons are required to perform this procedure with additional assistance needed when larger flags are involved. For flags larger than 1.5 x 3 meters (4.5 x 9 feet) the flag must be kept horizontal throughout. During funerals, where the coffin is Flag-draped, the Flag should be removed once the coffin is placed on the lowering device on the grave. Those folding the Flag should raise it horizontally to about waist height, step to the side of the grave and start the folding process. Once completed, the Flag may be presented to the next-of-kin.

### Red Carpet

In the field of diplomatic etiquette, it has been a long standing custom to use a red carpet to indicate the pathway the honoured dignitary follows during ceremonies. It is most commonly employed at official welcoming and departure ceremonies but may be used on other occasions to highlight the significance of the event. Examples where red carpeting may be used are:

- at official wreath laying ceremonies at war memorials and cenotaphs;
- at unveiling ceremonies;
- at ceremonies associated with the opening of Parliament or Provincial Legislatures; and
- in buildings, hotel entrances or lobbies for official functions being hosted at Vice-Regal level or by the Prime Minister/Premier.

There is no fixed protocol defining who is entitled to red carpet but as a general rule, it should be reserved for members of the Royal Family, Heads of State, Heads of Government and other persons of Regal or Vice-Regal status. Every attempt should be made to limit the occasions when red carpet is used, on the grounds that too frequent usage lessens the desired

significance of the display.

Care must be exercised to ensure that the red carpet lies flat on the ground and is sufficiently anchored to prevent it from lifting up in the wind. On calm days in protected areas, no fastening is usually required but at airports and other wind swept locations the carpet should be fastened down with double sided tape, concrete nails or screws. Particular attention is to be paid to carpeting stairs. It may be advisable not to cover stairs if the carpet cannot be firmly fastened.

### **Carrying Flags in Parades**

Occasionally Public Works and Government Services Canada will make flags available to organizations wishing to carry them in parades or processions. It is suggested that the pole or pike for this use be 2.1 to 2.4 metres (7 or 8 feet) in length.

Should the question arise, it is customary to use a flag sling or carrying belt when carrying flags and the flag party often wears white gloves. It is not normal for Public Works and Government Services Canada to supply these items.

The Royal Canadian Legion's Manual of Ritual and Insignia provides guidance on the carrying of flags on parade.

### **Car Flags**

The flag of the principal occupant of the car is flown from the right front fender. Should the Prime Minister share a car with Her Majesty the Queen, the Queen's Personal Canadian Flag will be displayed on the right and the National Flag on the left. If the Prime Minister shares a car with a foreign head of state or government, the National Flag is on the right and the foreign flag on the left.

## Guards of Honour Sample Layouts

Because of Public Works and Government Services Canada's involvement in providing ceremonial support to official Arrival and Departure Ceremonies for Royalty, Heads of State, Heads of Government and other distinguished persons, this section provides sample layouts and equipment lists which may be of value to users of these operating procedures.

### Military Guards of Honour and Departure Guards

#### Purpose

As a universal mark of respect honouring distinguished visitors, the Military Guard of Honour is usually provided as part of official welcoming and departure ceremonies.

#### Type

Guards of Honour vary in size depending on the status of the person honoured. They consist of:

- One Hundred Person Guard of Honour for Royalty, Heads of State, the Governor General and Lieutenant Governors of Provinces within the Province.
- Fifty Person Guard of Honour for Heads of Government, General Officers and other distinguished persons.
- Departure Guard consisting of one officer and 15 other ranks may be detailed for official departure ceremonies in lieu of the above.

#### Other Military Support

Guards of Honour are normally supported by a military band and an artillery troop to fire the gun salute in honour of the visitor.

#### Material Requirements

The arrivals and departures of official visitors are normally attended by appropriate level Canadian dignitaries with areas set aside for important guests and general public admission. The impact on Public Works and Government Services Canada operations is that crowd control systems, seating and attendant decorations, and usually a display of flags are normally required at each ceremony.

[Appendix I1](#) details a typical Guard of Honour with approximate dimensions. Equipment requirements are shown at [Appendix I2](#).

[Appendix I3](#) illustrates a Departure Guard. A red carpet and flags may or may not be used.

## Tips of the Trade

These tips come from some of the old hands in the business and are offered for what they are worth. You will note some are given in a somewhat tongue-in-cheek fashion.

Trust no one. Take nothing for granted. Always check, in sufficient time, to make corrections if necessary.

In flag displays, bigger is not necessarily better.

For interior flag displays it is usually necessary that the wrinkles be removed. This can be done by dampening the flags then putting them outside in the wind to dry.

Always check the shipment of ceremonial stores that is sent to you as soon as possible. In one case we got an Austrian flag instead of an Australian and on another occasion a New Zealand instead of an Australian flag.

A can of white spray paint will touch up exterior poles and concrete bases that have been slightly chipped in transit.

When preparing a display involving many foreign flags, write the number of the flag's order of precedence on a piece of masking tape near the base of the staff. If this is done in the trade shops before, a great deal of time will be saved at the site. If it is written at the bottom, it will be hidden by the base when mounted.

Murphy's Law states that more things go wrong in the half hour immediately before a ceremony than at any other time. Don't panic, just be ready for it.

When mounting flag poles in concrete bases or other socket type mountings, use wedges or shims to keep them from wobbling. Shims may also be required under the bases to keep them on the true vertical.

Get to know the length of your normal stride or pace. Based on the military pace of 75 centimetres (30 inches):

- 30 paces equals 23 metres (75 feet);
- 50 paces equals 38 metres (125 feet);
- a 1.8 metre (six foot) tall man can touch approximately 2.3 metres (7.5 feet) high;
- a hand span is approximately 20 to 26 centimetres (8 inches);
- a size 10 shoe is approximately 30 centimetres (12 inches) long.



## References

The following is a list of some of the publications used in assembling these operating procedures:

- PWGSC Departmental Policy 065, Display of the Flag of Canada.
- The Arms, Flags and Emblems of Canada, Second Edition 1981 (S2-2/1981E).
- General rules for flying and displaying the Canadian Flag and other flags in Canada 1978 (S2-74/1978).
- Symbols of Canada 1995 (S2-211/1995).
- Proclamation - National Flag of Canada - 28 January 1965.
- The Canada Gazette
  - 27 February 1965 - National Flag of Canada
  - 13 April 1968 - CF Ensign and CF Naval Jack
  - 09 June 1979 - Auxiliary Vessels Jack
- Flags, Ensigns, Colours, Pennants and Honours for the Canadian Forces A-AD-200-000/AG-000.
- Canadian Coast Guard Fleet Orders (CGFO 201.00) October 1989, revised May 1993.
- The Royal Canadian Legion Manual of Ritual and Insignia (1985).
- Canada: Symbols of Sovereignty by Conrad Swan, York Herald of Arms; University of Toronto Press 1977.
- Chart - Flags of United Nations Member States and National Holidays NOE 85.13 DPI 840 01 January 1985.
- United States Marine Corps Flag Manual (MCO P10520.3A).
- Flags Through the Ages and Across the World by Dr. Whitney Smith; McGraw-Hill Book Company 1975.
- Observer's Flags by William Crampton; Frederick Warne Publications Ltd. 1991.
- Flags of the World by EMC Barraclough and W.G. Crampton; Frederick Warne Publishers Ltd. 1978.
- Concise Encyclopedia of Heraldry by Guy Cadogan Rothery; Bracken Books 1985.
- Department of Canadian Heritage pamphlet - Flag Etiquette in Canada.
- The Flag Bulletin - The Flag Research Center, 3 Edgehill Rd., Winchester Mass. 01890 USA.
- Flagmaster - The Flag Institute, 10 Vicarage Rd., Chester CH 23HZ England.

Appendix A - Design of the Canadian Flag



## Appendix B - Order of Precedence for Flag Display



Figure 1. Order of Precedence  
National Flag and one other



Figure 2. Order of Precedence  
National Flag and two others

NOTE: As seen from the spectator's viewpoint.

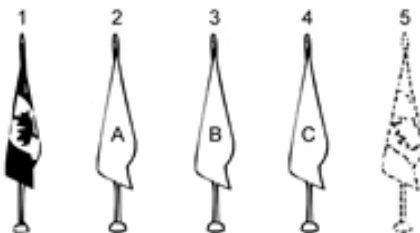


Figure 3. Order of Precedence  
National Flag and more than two others

NOTE: The National flag at position 5 is optional.



**Figure 4.** Order of Precedence with crossed staffs

**NOTE 1:** The National Flag staff is foremost.

**NOTE 2:** As seen from the spectator's viewpoint.

## Appendix C

- C1 - [Order of Precedence for the Flags of the Provinces and Territories](#)
- C2 - [Sample Layout for Provincial Flags](#)

### Appendix C1 - Order of Precedence for the Flags of the Provinces and Territories



1: Ontario



6: British Columbia



11: Northwest Territories



2: Québec



7: Prince Edward Island



12: Yukon



3: Nova Scotia



8: Saskatchewan



13: Nunavut



4: New Brunswick



9: Alberta



5: Manitoba



10: Newfoundland  
and Labrador

## Appendix C2 - Sample Layout for Provincial Flags

The numbers below represent the order of precedence for the National Flag and the Provincial flags:

1	National Flag	8	Prince Edward Island
2	Ontario	9	Saskatchewan
3	Québec	10	Alberta
4	Nova Scotia	11	Newfoundland
5	New Brunswick	12	Northwest Territories
6	Manitoba	13	Yukon
7	British Columbia	14	Nunavut

Figure 1. Order of precedence



Figure 2. Display along a wall

NOTE 1: A second National Flag on the right is optional

NOTE 2: As seen by the observer.

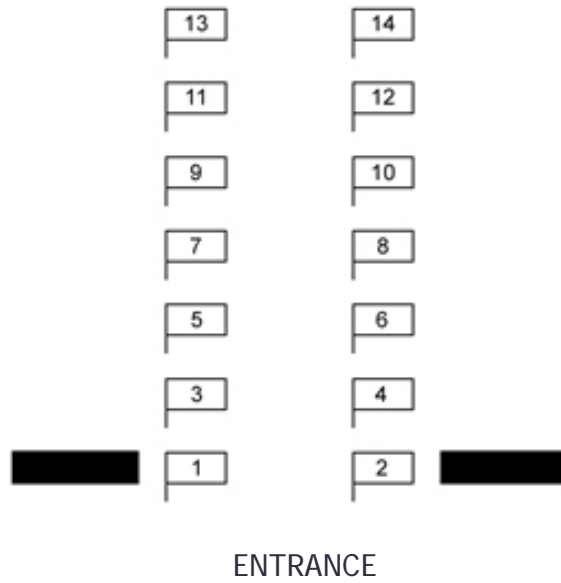


Figure 3. Display flanking an entrance

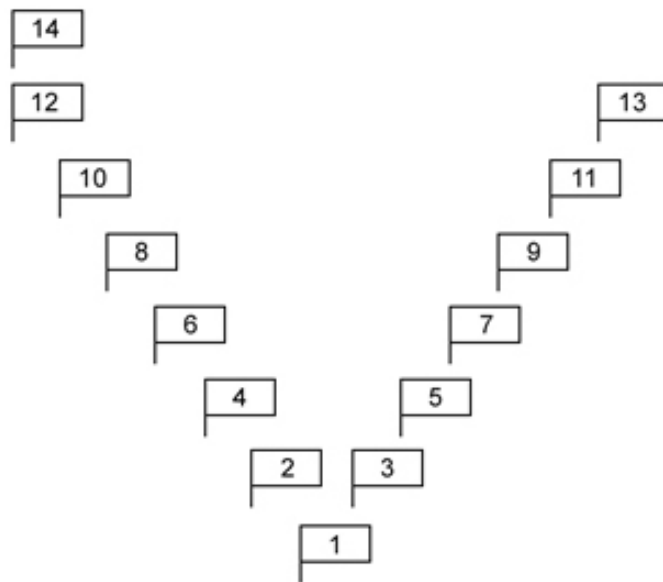


Figure 4. "V" Display for visual effect

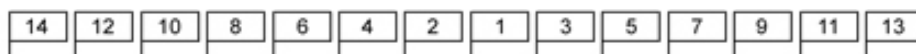


Figure 5. National Flag in centre of display

NOTE: All the above displays could also apply using foreign flags.

## Appendix D

- D1 - [Royal Flags and Standards](#)
- D2 - [The Governor General's Flag](#)

### Appendix D1 - Royal Flags and Standards



Figure 1. H.M. the Queen's Personal Canadian Flag



Figure 2. H.R.H. Prince Philip Duke of Edinburgh's Standard



Figure 3. H.R.H. Prince Charles the Prince of Wales' Standard



Figure 4. H.R.H. Princess Anne's Standard



**Appendix D2 - The Governor General's Flag**



Figure 5

## Appendix E - Order of Precedence - Union Flag

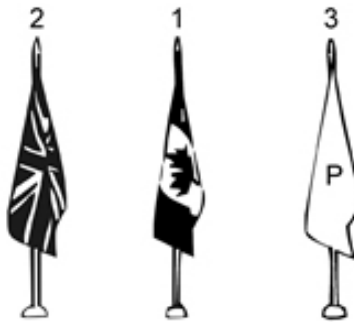


Figure 1. Precedence - Representing the United Kingdom

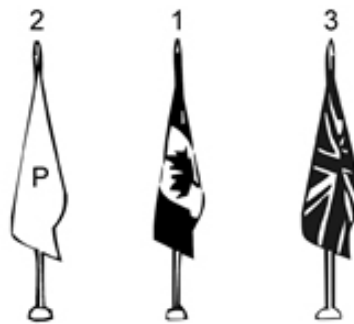


Figure 2. Precedence - Representing Canada's Membership in the Commonwealth

NOTE 1: As seen from the spectator's viewpoint.

NOTE 2: Flag P is the Provincial flag.



*Repeat as required*

Figure 3. Precedence for street lining for a Royal Visit in Ottawa

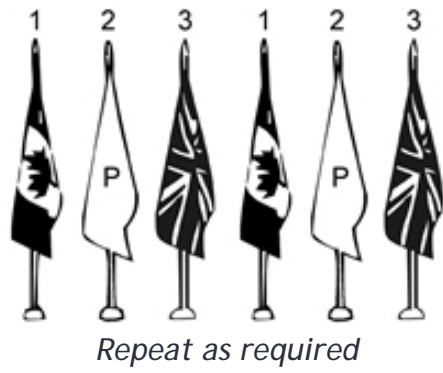


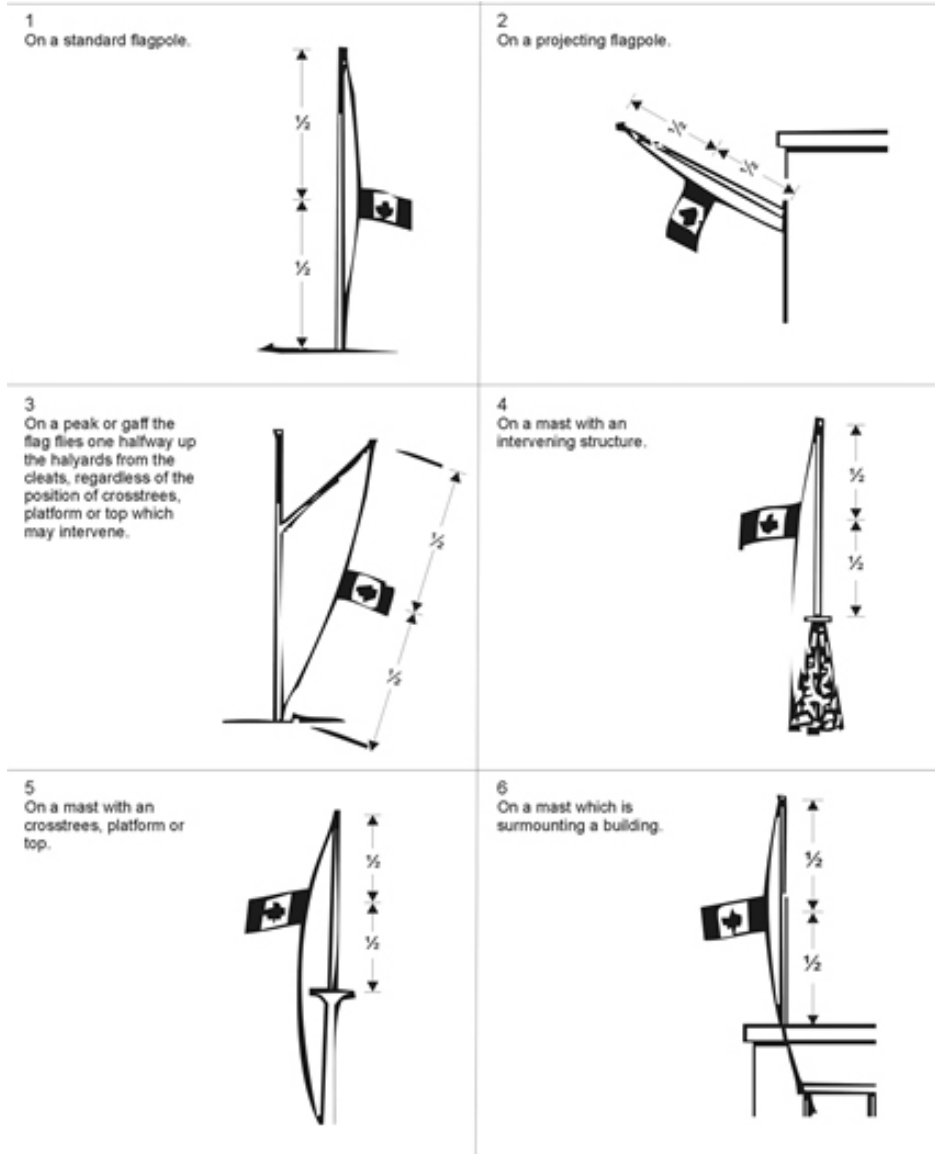
Figure 4. Precedence for street lining for a Royal Visit outside of Ottawa

NOTE: Flag P is the Provincial flag.

## Appendix F

- F1 - [Half-Masting Flags](#)
- F2 - [Draping of the National Flag on a Casket](#)

### Appendix F1 - Half-Masting Flags



## Appendix F2 - Draping of the National Flag on a Casket

### CIVILIAN

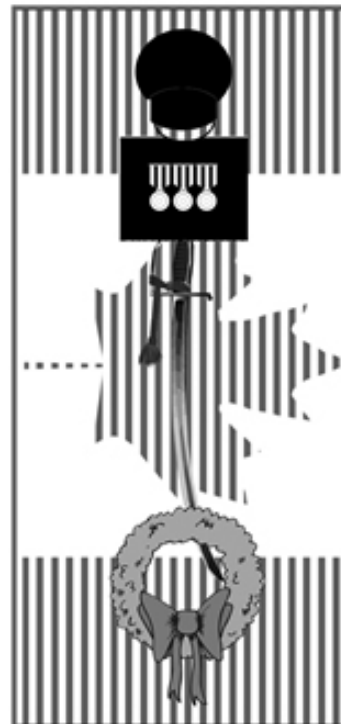
Head



Foot

### MILITARY

Head



Foot

NOTE: Flag size should be 1.4 x 2.7 m (4.5 x 9 feet)

## Appendix G

- G1 - [Poles Rigged with a Gaff or Yard](#)
- G2 - [Outdoor Flag Pole Base](#)

### Appendix G1 - Poles Rigged with a Gaff or Yard

These poles are most commonly seen at locations having connections with naval establishments ashore, such as a yacht club.

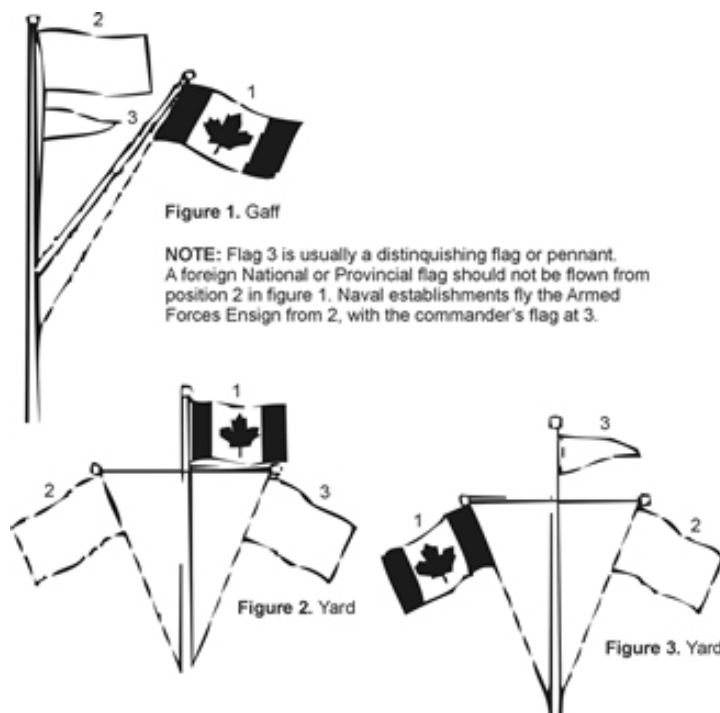


Figure 3 shows an option to figure 2 when a distinguishing flag is deployed.

NOTE: As viewed by a spectator in front of the flag pole.

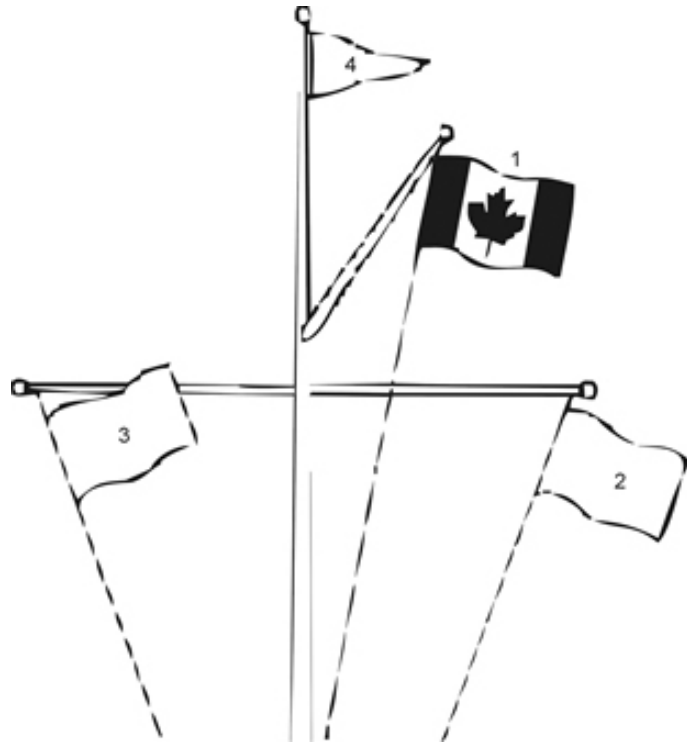


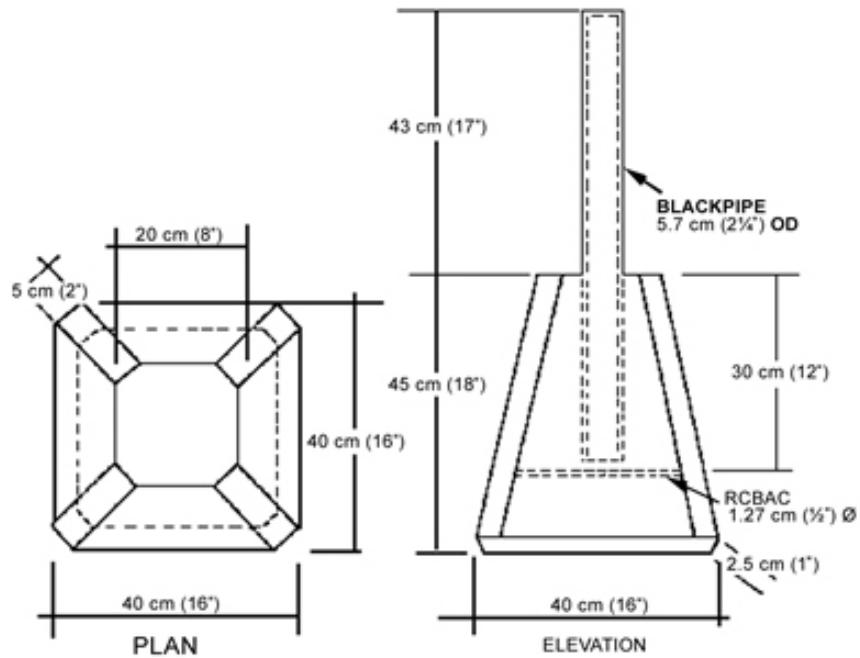
Figure 4. Gaff and Yard

NOTE 1: As viewed by a spectator in front of the flag pole.

NOTE 2: A distinguishing flag or pennant is usually flown from position 4.

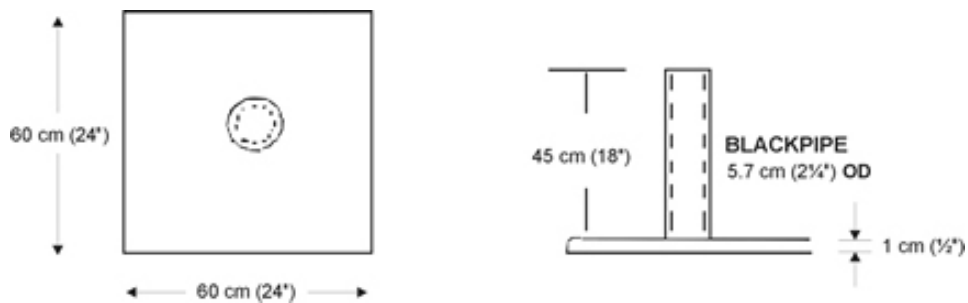
## Appendix G2 - Outdoor Flag Pole Base

### Option 1. Concrete Base



This flag base is to be built of concrete and shall weigh approximately 90 kg (200 lb.), being capable of supporting a flag pole of 4.4 cm (1.75") diameter x 3.6 m (12') long, carrying a flag 91 cm x 1.8 m (3' x 6').

### Option 2. Steel Base



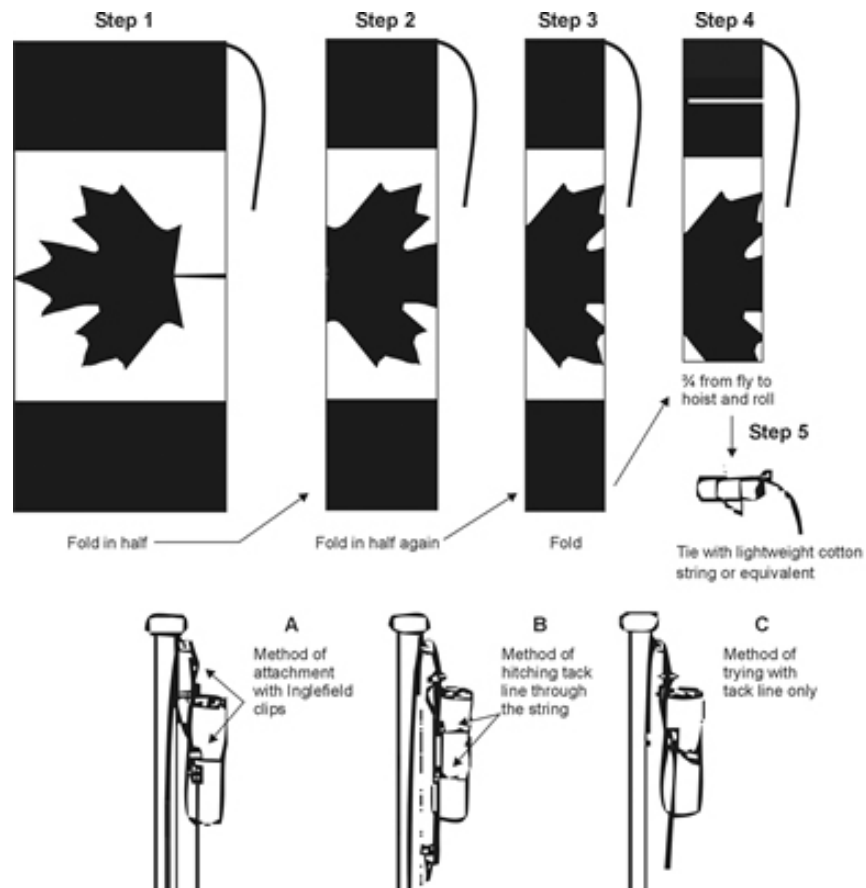
This is lighter and more durable than Option 1 but provides the same stability.



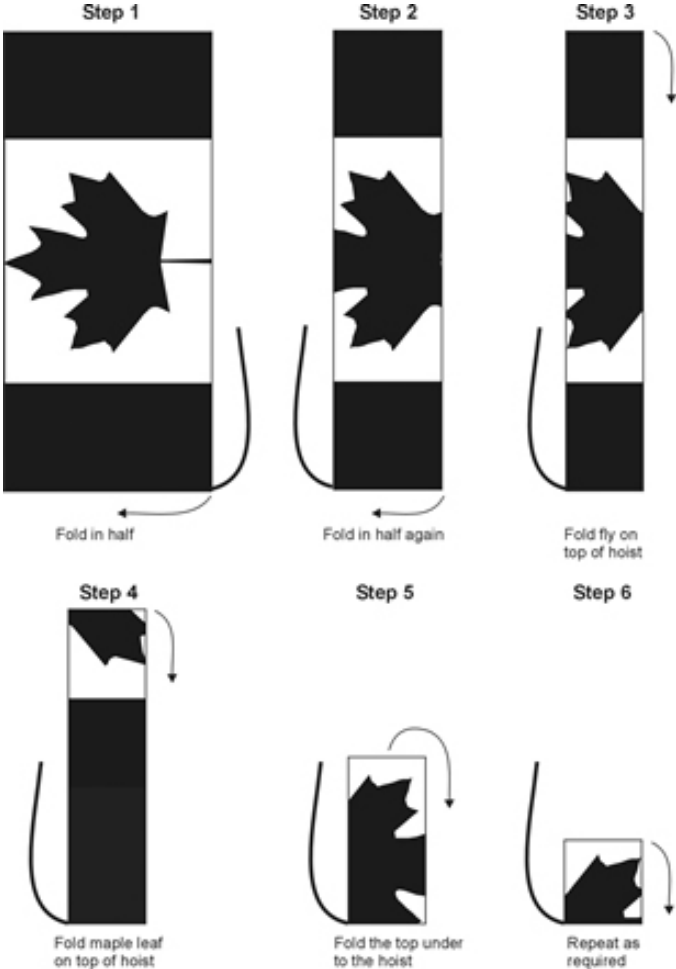
## Appendix H

- H1 - [Preparation of Flag for Breaking](#)
- H2 - [Folding the Flag](#)

### Appendix H1 - Preparation of Flag for Breaking



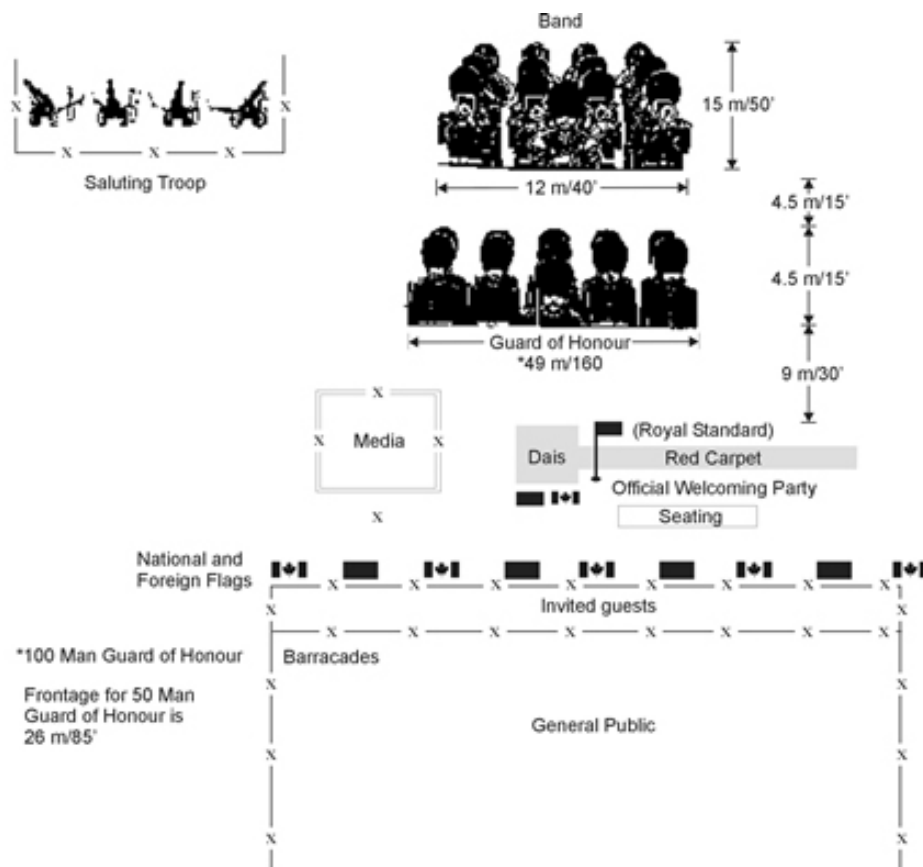
**Appendix H2 - Folding the Flag**



## Appendix I

- I1 - [Military Guard of Honour](#)
- I2 - [Equipment Requirements for Military Guards of Honour](#)
- I3 - [Departure Guard](#)

### Appendix I1 - Military Guard of Honour



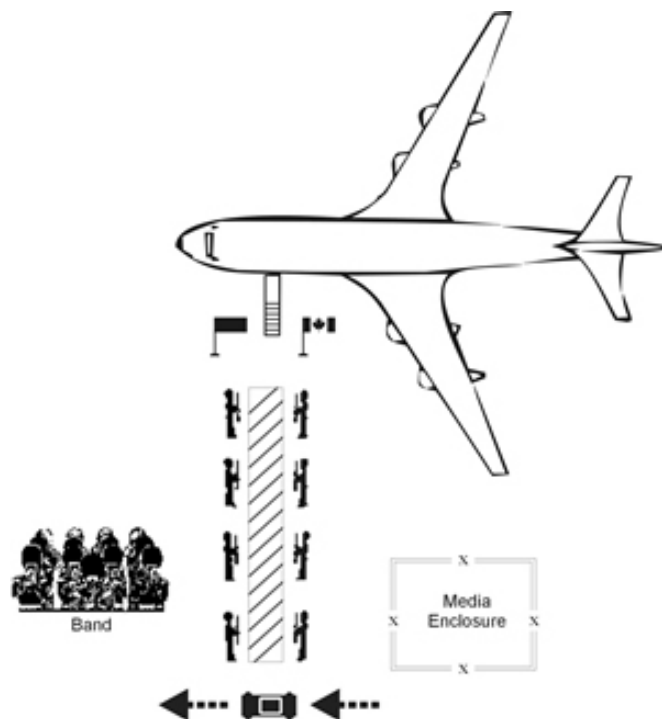
### Appendix I2 - Equipment Requirements for Military Guards of Honour

The following checklist is provided as a guide only, to which additions and deletions will be necessary for each ceremony.

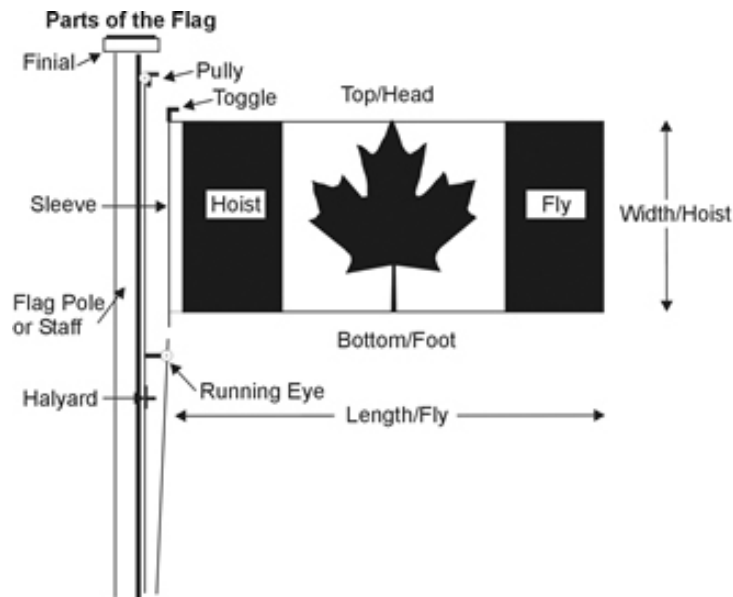
Serial	Item	Remarks
1	Barricades, ropes and stanchions	Normally required to separate public and press from official ceremony.
2	Flags on exterior poles and bases	Usually the National, foreign and provincial flags, when applicable, alternately.

3	Exterior pole with halyard	Located near dais/saluting base. Personal flag/standard of visitor is broken out on arrival.
4	Red Carpet	As required
5	Dais/Saluting base	Usually 1.5 m x 1.5 m x 20 cm (4' x 4' x 8") but may be much larger and complex if required.
6	Lectern	If speeches are given at the ceremony, PA system will be required.
7	Seating	Required for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Official Welcoming Party, 4 to 20 chairs;</li> <li>2. Invited Guest seating chairs/bleachers;</li> <li>3. General Public chairs/bleachers/standing room.</li> </ul>
8	Media Enclosure	May include barricades and risers of varying height, length and location.
9	Parking Area	Barricades and signage may be required.
10	Wet Weather enclosed area	Usually a hangar at airport. In general all of above are required but may be scaled down.

### Appendix I3 - Departure Guard



## Appendix J - Glossary of Terms



**Figure 1.** Obverse View of the National Flag with Parts Named

**NOTE 1:** When describing the details of a flag, it is assumed that the flag is flying from a staff with the flag flying towards the right as seen by the observer.

**NOTE 2:** It is customary when describing the dimensions of a flag to state the width first then the length, i.e., 1 metre by 2 metres, 3 feet by 6 feet, etc.

This glossary has been selected to assist those personnel of Public Works and Government Services Canada who may be called upon to provide ceremonial support to clients. Some definitions are not necessarily complete but are deemed to be adequate within the Public Works and Government Services Canada requirement. Many of the definitions were extracted from *Flags Through the Ages and Across the World* by Dr. Whitney Smith. See "[References](#)" for list of related publications.

### **Banner**

See Flag - Banner.

### **Belt - Carrying**

A belt, usually worn over the shoulder by persons carrying a flag or colour. Made of leather, nylon or embroidered cloth with a sturdy cup to hold the base of the pole or pike. (Ceinture

porte-drapeau).

### **Breakout a Flag/Break a Flag**

To unfurl a flag which has been rolled and tied in such a way that a sharp tug on the halyard will cause it to open out. Personal standards such as the Queen's Personal Canadian Flag and the Governor General's Flag are normally broken out from a pole near the saluting base on their arrival at a military ceremony. (Déploiement d'un drapeau)

### **Bunting**

Strong loosely woven material used for making flags, originally of wool but often of other fibres. Bunting material is also used as decorative material over archways, portals and on stands and platforms. (Étamine)

### **Burgee**

See Flag - Burgee.

### **Carrying Belt**

See Belt - Carrying.

### **Civil Flag**

See Flag - Civil.

### **Colour(s)**

The flag of a military unit, often used in plural form as a pair of flags are frequently issued to units. The Queen's Colour is usually in the form of a National Flag with other embellishments and a Regimental Colour on which the unit's battle honours are emblazoned. Colours are consecrated and treated with great respect. They are always under armed escort and saluted when removed from their place of safekeeping. Used in the naval sense to denote ship's flags and the time of day the ship's Ensign and Jack are hoisted. (Drapeau(x) militaire(s))

### **Cord**

A piece of twisted material or cording, usually with tassels, to decorate a flag. Often issued with fringed flags and Colours. The cord is attached to the staff just below the finial. (Cordon)

### **Close-up**

Refers to a flag being hauled up tightly to the top of a flag pole or mast. (Jusqu'au bout)

## **Crape**

Black silk-like material used for draping archways, tables, etc. at state funerals as a symbol of mourning. May also be worn as a band around a person's upper left arm (about 10 cm (4 inches) wide) at funerals and during periods of mourning. (Crêpe)

## **Cravat**

A scarf-like piece of black silk, crape or nylon of approximate dimensions 10 cm x 430 cm (4 inches x 14 feet). It is tied in a bow and used to drape flags and Colours during periods of mourning. Also called Mourning Ribbon. Some countries tie coloured cravats on their military Colours and, when used in this sense, are not a sign of mourning. (Foulard)

## **Dexter**

The right-hand part of a flag or shield from the view point of the bearer or on the left as seen by the spectator. Antonym of sinister. (Dextre)

## **Device**

A heraldic design, emblem or motto. (Devise)

## **Draping**

The decoration of a pike or staff with a black cravat as a sign of mourning. (Drapement)

## **Ensign**

See Flag - Ensign.

## **Field**

The background of a flag or shield. (Champ)

## **Finial**

The decorative ornament on the top of a pike, staff or pole. May be in the form of a spearpoint, ball, maple leaf, crown, etc. (Extrémité décorative)

## **Flag**

A piece of coloured bunting or nylon usually rectangular and frequently embellished with various designs and devices to denote national, provincial, political, military, social or religious affiliation. (Drapeau)

## **Flag - Banner**

A flag of any kind but now usually a large flag hanging from a crossbar or suspended between two poles. Because the word has changed meaning it is preferable to use the more specific term. Trumpet Banner, Pipe Banner, etc. (Drapeau - bannière)

## **Flag - Burgee**

A triangular or swallow-tailed flag usually flown from the mast head of a yacht or vessel to distinguish ownership or club membership. (Drapeau - cornette)

## **Flag - Civil**

The national flag flown on land by private citizens. (Some countries differentiate between civil and state flags.) (Drapeau civil)

## **Flag - Distinguishing**

A flag flown to identify or indicate presence of a person, official or institution. The following are entitled to fly distinguishing flags:

- a. The Sovereign and members of the Royal Family
- b. Foreign Royalty or Heads of State
- c. The Governor General
- d. The Lieutenant Governor within the Province
- e. The Prime Minister
- f. The Minister of National Defence and Minister of Transport
- g. The Deputy Minister of Transport and the Administrator, Canadian Marine Transportation Administration
- h. Certain Military and Coast Guard Officers. (Drapeau distinctif)

## **Flag - Ensign**

The national flag of a country adapted for use aboard a ship. Also may refer to flags flown by the Armed Forces such as The Canadian Forces Ensign. (Drapeau - enseigne)

## **Flag - House**

A distinguishing flag of an institution or commercial firm. Most often used at sea. Sometimes used to refer to the flag of the individual owner of the vessel or institution. (Drapeau d'institution)

## **Flag - Guidon**

A Colour of an armoured regiment. The Guidon is swallow-tailed. (Drapeau - guidon)



### **Flag - Jack**

A flag worn on the bow of a ship to indicate its nationality. (Drapeau - pavillon de beaupré)

### **Flag - National**

A flag representing an independent nation; when capitalized, in these articles, it refers to the National Flag of Canada or The Canadian Flag. (Drapeau national)

### **Flag - Pennant**

A term referring to a diverse number of flags which are usually swallow-tailed or narrow and triangular. Often used at sea. Normally the more definitive term is used, i.e., Broad Pennant, Burgee, Lance Pennant or Pennon, Commissioning Pennant, etc. (Drapeau - flamme)

### **Flag - Rank**

A distinguishing flag of an individual's official position, civil or military. (See Flag - Distinguishing.) (Drapeau de grade)

### **Flag - Standard**

A distinguishing flag which depicts the armorial bearings of the person entitled to fly it. Certain members of the Royal Family have personal standards which are flown to denote presence. Refers also to the military Colour of Guards, Armoured Regiments and Air Force Squadrons. (Drapeau - pavillon)

### **Flag - State**

The national flag of a nation flown over government buildings and property. Usually in the form of a Civil Flag embellished with the national coat of arms or crest. (Drapeau d'État)

### **Flag - Table**

A small flag mounted on a staff and base suitable for display on a table or desk. (Drapeau de table)

### **Fly**

That part of a flag opposite the sleeve or pole. Also a synonym for length. (Battant)

### **Gaff**

A spar jutting from the mizzenmast of a ship or, on land, a staff extending at an angle from a flag pole from which a flag is worn (flown). (Corne)

## **Grommet**

A hole reinforced by stitching or a metal ring usually at both ends of the heading of a flag through which clips attached to the halyard are fastened. (Rondelle)

## **Half-Mast/Half-Staff a Flag**

To fly a flag at any point below its normal position at the top of a pole, usually as a sign of mourning. The Canadian practice on land is to align the centre of the hoist of the flag with the half way point of the pole or staff. (Mise en berne d'un drapeau)

## **Halyard**

The rope by which a flag is hoisted. Usually has rings, toggles or clips with which it is connected to a flag. (Drisse)

## **Heading**

A piece of heavy material, usually canvas, along the hoist of a flag into which a rope is sewn or grommets are installed to facilitate hoisting a flag. (Tête)

## **Hoist**

That part of the flag nearest the pole. To raise a flag up a pole. Also a synonym for width of a flag. (Guindant)

## **House - Flag**

See Flag - House.

## **Inglefield Clips**

Specially devised metal clips attached to a halyard with which flags are attached, usually made of brass. (Attaches Inglefield)

## **Mast Head**

Top of the flag pole or mast. (Tête de mât)

## **Mourning Ribbon**

See Cravat.

## **National Flag**

See Flag - National.

## **Obverse**

The more important side of a flag; usually the hoist is to the dexter. The antonym of reverse. (Face)

## **Pennant**

See Flag - Pennant.

## **Pike**

A staff or pole on which is mounted a military Colour. The top of a pike is fitted with a decorative finial in the form of a Canadian pike head which is the Crest of the Arms of Canada; a lion holding a maple leaf in its dexter paw. (Hampe)

## **Pole - Flag/Mast/Staff**

A tall slender piece of wood, metal or other material fitted with a device to hoist or attach a flag. The words pole, staff, and mast (on land) are interchangeable. (Mât)

## **Precedence/Superior Position**

The system of placing flags for a ceremony or display in order of importance. (Ordre de préséance)

## **Reverse**

The less important side of the flag, usually the hoist is to the sinister. The antonym of obverse.

## **Running Eye and Toggle**

The method of hoisting a flag by means of a rope sewn into its heading which has a wooden toggle at the top and a loop of rope at the bottom that fastens to their opposites at the end of a halyard. This is the most common system employed in the Department. (Oeillet courant et cabillot)

## **Sinister**

The left hand side of a flag or shield from the bearer's view point or the right side from the observer's. The antonym of dexter. (Sénestre)

**Staff**

See Pole - Flag.

**Standard**

See Flag - Standard.

**State Flag**

See Flag - State.

**Table Flag**

See Flag - Table.

**Vexillology**

The scientific study of the history, symbolism and usage of flags or any interest in flags in general. (Vexillologie)

**Yard**

A bar or spar attached horizontally to a ship's mast or to a flagpole. (Bout de vergue)