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How to Fly an American Flag in Respect of the Deceased



The American flag is one of the most recognizable symbols in the United States and is an excellent way for American citizens to say thank you and show respect to their home country. The flag has been a symbol of patriotism since its adoption on June 14, 1777 and while it has had cosmetic changes since then it still stands for the same ideals.

While some homes and businesses fly a United States flag every day, others may display them only on holidays, but it is important for all flag fliers to do so properly upon the death of great American individuals, past and present. You may have seen a flag flying at half-mast before and it was not a national holiday reserved for this tradition so you were unsure of why, but there are many other reasons why a flag would be flying in the mid-point of the pole instead of at the peak.

The United States president is the government official who orders when all American flags should be flown at half-staff in respect of the deceased, but not every government member receives the same ceremonious rituals. Upon the death of a United States president, current or former, all American flags should be flown at half-mast for 30 days. The flag should be flown at the mid-point of the pole for 10 days upon the death of the current vice president; a sitting or former United State Supreme Court Justice; and for the Speaker of the House.



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For other government officials such as, former vice presidents; an associate U.S. Supreme Court justice; the secretary of an executive or military department; and a state governor, the American Flag is flown at half-mast from the day of their death until internment. And to recognize the death of a member of the United States Congress the flag should be flown at half-staff for the day of death and the day after.

And the respect of flying a flag at half-mast is not just reserved for United States government officials. The President may require that flags be flown at half-staff for Americans who have been recognized for their non-government achievements and for foreign officials and dignitaries upon their deaths.

Contact Details:

Ultimate Flags

10185 NE 22 St

Okeechobee, FL 34974

(863) 467-0584

Website: <https://ultimateflags.com>

Google Site: <https://sites.google.com/site/ultimateflagsonline/>

Google Drive: <https://mgvb.co/s/90c01>

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