



Honoring Our Country's Flag

Do you live in a community of flag flyers? I'm happy to say that I do. Several of my neighbors fly the Stars and Stripes proudly every day of the year. My immediate neighbor has his up shortly after dawn and takes it down solemnly every night at dusk.

But it's not just my neighbor. On July 4 and then again on Sept. 11 there were flags flying on most of the houses in our neighborhood. One gentleman had an entire row of them running along the sidewalk in front of his house.

How about in your neighborhood; and at your house? If you haven't been flying the U.S. flag lately may I encourage you to do so? You'll feel better seeing the Stars and Stripes waving bravely in the wind. And so will the other people who see it; or at least most of them, I bet.

I think there may be an age thing going on here. I live in a community of people who are mostly retired. Heck, I'm supposed to be retired myself, but I got so bored after I sold the company I founded, I had to find *something* to do or my wife was going to kill me. Well, not really. But there are only so many hinges you can oil and light bulbs you can change.

So I took on a part-time job. Then another one. Then a third one. Now I find myself with more to do than when I was working full-time. No complaints, you understand. Writing three columns a week for [PersonalLiberty.com](#) — and seeing some of the comments and controversy they stir up — is one of the great joys of my life.

Back to the flag. I'm sure there are many communities where it would be hard to find a flag flying, even on the 4th of July. If you happen to live in one of them I feel sorry for you. And even more for your neighbors.

But here's an idea: Why don't you try to start a new trend? Go to your local hardware store and buy a flag and a mount for it. It will only cost you a few dollars.

Put it up near your front door or on a tree in your front yard. Or on your garage or by an attic window; you'll know where it makes the most sense.

Then start flying it and see what happens. Every day is a good day to fly the flag, but some holidays are especially appropriate. I've already mentioned the 4th of July and Sept. 11. Later this month there's Columbus Day (Monday, Oct. 11) and Navy Day (Wednesday, Oct. 27). Don't forget Veterans Day on Nov. 11, or Thanksgiving two weeks later.

By the way, if you would like to have a really special flag to fly outside your home, here's an idea: Get





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one that has flown over the U.S. Capitol. You may not know it, but it's possible to order such flags through your United States Senator. In fact, you can go one better — you can request one be flown on a specific day of the year, such as your anniversary or birthday.

Years ago I got one for my mother that had been flown on her birthday. She was so thrilled, she cried. She had me mount it right outside her front door. We put a spotlight near it so she could fly it at night. (Contrary to what many people think, the U.S. Flag Code says it's perfectly all right to fly the flag at night, so long as it is properly illuminated.) Whenever I pulled into her driveway, her flag was one of the first things I saw. And I always felt better when I did.

If you don't know who your U.S. Senators are (you have two of them), let me tell you how to find out. Just click [here](#) for the government website and type in your state. When you do, the names, addresses, and contact information for your senators will appear. Pick one, call his or her office, and a member of their staff will be delighted to be of assistance.

And here's an extra treat: Your flag will arrive with a certificate from the Architect of the Capitol certifying that your flag was flown as requested. If you mention that the flag is for a special occasion that information will be included on the form. Perhaps you know someone, like my mother, who would be thrilled to receive such a gift. May I remind you that Christmas is just three months away?

Let me mention a couple of other things you may not have known about the proper etiquette for flying the U.S. flag:

- The flag should be hoisted briskly and lowered more slowly. This applies more to raising it on a flag pole than it does to mounting it on your home, but keep it in mind.
- The flag should never be allowed to touch the ground (or the water, if on a boat). But it is not true that if the flag does touch the ground, it should be destroyed.
- When a flag becomes too faded to be a fitting emblem for our country, it should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning. If you are in doubt how to do this, your nearest American Legion or VFW Post will be delighted to assist you.
- If the flag is to be flown at half-mast, it should first be hoisted to the peak, then lowered half-way down. It should again be raised to the peak before it is lowered for the day.
- If you are ever at an event where the "Pledge of Allegiance" or the Star-Spangled Banner is performed, the proper thing to do is to stand at attention with your right hand over your heart. (Servicemen and women in uniform should salute.) If you are wearing a hat or cap, remove it and hold it in your right hand, with the hat at your left shoulder. If others are not as respectful of the flag during such a ceremony, it is appropriate to remonstrate with them. If you're at an athletic event when this happens, the ushers should do so.
- And — I think you knew this — no other flag should *ever* be flown higher than the flag of the United States. In fact, our nation's flag should always take precedence wherever it is flown. The only exception to this rule (and it's not one I'm happy with) is at the headquarters of the United Nations in New York City. There, all country flags are flown equally high, and the U.N. flag is flown a little bit higher. You can guess how I feel about this.
- Finally, when the flag is used to cover a casket, it should be so placed so that the union is at the head and over the left shoulder. The flag should not be lowered into the ground but carefully removed and folded. Last year I was honored to be invited to the burial with full military honors — including a horse-



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drawn caisson and 21-gun salute — of a friend at Arlington Cemetery. It was so incredibly moving that I still get goose-bumps remembering it.

By the way, the U.S. Flag Code specifically prohibits wearing the U.S. flag *or any clothing based on its design*. I know that many people think wearing a jacket, polo shirt, or sweater that consists of the stars and stripes is somehow a demonstration of their patriotism. I appreciate the sentiment but it's not appropriate. If you own such attire, please dispose of it.

If you are going to wear a lapel pin of the flag or part of it, it should be worn on the left lapel near the heart. I've been guilty of violating this one myself. In fact, it wasn't until I read the Flag Code, in preparation for this article, that I realized my error.

Finally, if you enjoyed this column, please do two things. One, share it with a friend. And two, say a "thank you" to my wife, who suggested it. And she says I never listen to her.

Until next time, keep some powder dry — and the flag flying.

Chip Wood was the first news editor of *The Review of the News* and also wrote for *American Opinion*, our two predecessor publications. He is now the geopolitical editor of *Personal Liberty Digest*, where his *Straight Talk* column appears twice a month. This article first appeared in [PersonalLiberty.com](#) and has been reprinted with permission.



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