

UNCLASSIFIED (U)

2 FAM 150

SEALS, COAT OF ARMS, AND FLAGS

(CT:GEN-572; 05-20-2021)
(Office of Origin: A/GIS/DIR)

2 FAM 151 POLICY AND AUTHORITY

2 FAM 151.1 Policy

(CT:GEN-344; 08-26-2008)

- a. Because the seals, emblems, and flags of the United States and its government units are their visual and symbolic representations (and sometimes manifestations), it is Department policy that any use of such shall be in a proper and dignified manner.
- b. It is not appropriate to use representations of the Great Seal of the United States, the Coat of Arms of the United States, or the U.S. flag in such a manner as to be disposable items.

2 FAM 151.2 Scope

(CT:GEN-344; 08-26-2008)

This subchapter applies to the use of seals, emblems, and flags at the Department of State and Foreign Service posts and for other official purposes.

2 FAM 151.3 Responsibilities

(CT:GEN-444; 06-16-2015)

- a. Department:
 - (1) Flags: The Support Services Branch (A/OPR/FMS/GSM/SS) manages the acquisition and display of flags for the Main State building, and maintains a flag library for use in Main State. This office can also provide

information for posts on obtaining flags (202-647-1634/35);

- (2) Great Seal: The Office of Presidential Appointments is the point of contact for questions concerning the use of the Great Seal of the United States;
 - (3) Department Seal: The Bureau of Consular Affairs, Passport Services Directorate's Office of Authentications (CA/PPT/S/TO/AUT) manages the use of this seal for document authentication purposes. For questions regarding other uses of the Department Seal, including use by commercial entities, consult the Office of the Legal Adviser; and,
 - (4) Visa and passport seals: The Bureau of Consular Affairs manages the domestic use of passport and visa seals.
- b. At post: Post management officers manage the acquisition, display, and use of flags and seals, except for consular seals. The Bureau of Consular Affairs' Office of the Executive Director's General Services Division manages the acquisition and use of specialized consular seals overseas.

2 FAM 151.4 Authorities

(CT:GEN-344; 08-26-2008)

- a. Great Seal of the United States—4 U.S.C. 41 - 42.
- b. Use of likenesses of the Great Seal—18 U.S.C. 713.
- c. Wrongful use of a Government seal—18 U.S.C. 1017.
- d. Forging Government seal—18 U.S.C. 506.
- e. Impressing a seal directly on paper—1 U.S.C. 114.
- f. Display and use of the flag—4 U.S.C. 5 - 10.
- g. Display of the flag for mourning—Presidential Proclamation 3044, as amended by Presidential Proclamation 3948. See [2 FAM Exhibit 155.4-1](#).
- h. POW and/or MIA flag—36 U.S.C. 902.

2 FAM 152 SEALS

2 FAM 152.1 Description of Official Seals

(CT:GEN-444; 06-16-2015)

- a. **Great Seal of the United States:** The obverse of the Great Seal of the United States is the Coat of Arms of the United States, a bald eagle with its wings outstretched and with 13 arrows in its left talon and an olive branch in its right talon. This image is the official emblem and mark of identification of the U.S. Government. This seal was adopted by a resolution of Congress passed on June 20, 1782, fixing the design of The Great Seal for the United States in Congress. After adoption of the U.S. Constitution, Congress provided by an Act approved September 15, 1789, that this seal should be the Seal of the United States of America, and designated the Secretary of State as custodian of the Seal.
- b. **Department of State seals:** The official seal of the Department of State carries the design on the obverse of the Great Seal of the United States within an encircling legend Department of State, United States of America. See [5 FAH-7 Exhibit H-122](#). Impression, wax, and rubber-stamp seals used at posts bear the same design, generally encircled by a legend indicating the rank and location of the post; e.g., Embassy of the United States of America, Caracas. On seals for the use of consulates general, consular agencies, and consulates, the location and name of the country also appears.

2 FAM 152.2 Using Official Seals

2 FAM 152.2-1 Great Seal of the United States

(CT:GEN-344; 08-26-2008)

- a. The Great Seal of the United States is used for the authentication of certain documents after the President of the United States has signed them.
- b. Federal law (1 U.S.C. 114) provides that where "a seal" is necessary by law to any commission, process, or other instrument provided for by the laws of Congress, it is lawful to affix the proper seal by making an impression therewith directly on the paper to which such seal is necessary. Such a seal is less likely to be defaced than one made on wax, and by enactment, impressions of this kind are almost universally allowed as a substitute for seals on wax.
- c. For use of the U.S. Coat of Arms (the obverse of the Great Seal) in overseas posts, see [2 FAM 153](#).
- d. For use of the Great Seal on treaties and other international agreements, see [11 FAM 734](#).
- e. The Department of State is not authorized by law to grant or to withhold permission to reproduce the design of the Great Seal of the United States for unofficial purposes. Federal law prohibits many uses of likenesses of the Great Seal, including uses designed to convey a false impression of sponsorship or approval by the U.S. Government (see 18 U.S.C. 713). The Department's general policy is to strongly discourage use of the Great Seal for unofficial purposes.

2 FAM 152.2-2 Department of State Seals

(CT:GEN-444; 06-16-2015)

- a. Department of State personnel are authorized to affix replicas and reproductions of Department Seals to appropriate documents, certifications, and other materials for all official purposes, consistent with this section.
- b. Department of State seals or reproductions thereof may not be used for unofficial purposes by any person, and may not be used by any nongovernment person or entity, without the express approval of the Department. The chief of mission or designee must immediately notify the Office of the Inspector General, Office of Investigations (OIG/INV) when misuse of an official seal is determined.
- c. Department seals are used:
 - (1) In the performance of consular services (see [7 FAM 800](#));
 - (2) When preparing Department correspondence (see 5 FAH-1, Correspondence Handbook); and
 - (3) When including Department Seals in printed or electronic graphic products (see Graphics Handbook, [5 FAH-7 H-122](#) through H-125).
- d. For instructions concerning the affixing of the consular seal on the premises and property of U.S. decedents, see [7 FAM 294.2](#) paragraph a and [7 FAM 294.5](#).
- e. Wrongful use of the official seals of the Department of State could subject the individual or entity to the provisions of 18 U.S.C. 1017, which provides penalties for the wrongful use of an official seal; or 18 U.S.C. 506, which provides penalties for forgery or fraudulent making of a Department seal, and to other provisions of law, as applicable.

2 FAM 152.3 Sealing Equipment at Foreign Service Posts

(CT:GEN-444; 06-16-2015)

Each post is provided with the following necessary supplies and devices for the affixing of its official seals:

- (1) Impression seal: An impression seal (also termed press seal) is a metal engraving seal die affixed to a press mechanism, used to make a raised impression on an instrument, document, or other paper. The impression seal is used in performing notarial services, issuing visas and passports, and performing certain shipping and seamen services;
- (2) Rubber stamp seal: A rubber stamp seal is a small rubber seal die affixed to a round rubber stamp. It is generally used in connection with the certification of consular invoices and for certain shipping and seamen services and on certain administrative documents;

- (3) Wax seal: A wax seal is a small metal engraving seal die affixed to a short wooden handle, used for making impressions on wax. It is used to seal premises and effects in estate cases, to seal envelopes and packages, or other items as needed;
- (4) Porter safety seal press: A porter safety seal press is a metal press mechanism having a die affixed to each side bearing, on the side having the emblem of the Great Seal, the rank of the office; on the other side appears the name of the city (or city and country depending on rank of post) where the office is located. It is pressed on small, blank lead seals to seal official pouches;
- (5) Embossing and printing dies: Embossing and printing dies are small steel dies, which may be loaned to local printers by posts for printing and embossing stationery procured locally; and
- (6) Notarial wafer: A notarial wafer is a round, red, blank paper wafer used in notarial acts when the instrument or document to which the notarial act relates consists of more than one sheet, or when the certificate will be attached and not written on the document itself. The impression seal of the post is impressed on the wafer.

2 FAM 152.3-1 Requesting Sealing Devices

(CT:GEN-444; 06-16-2015)

Requisition sealing devices from the Department's Office of Logistics Management (A/LM). Requisition specialized consular seals from the Bureau of Consular Affairs' Office of the Executive Director's General Services Division (CA/EX/GSD).

2 FAM 152.3-2 Safeguarding Sealing Devices and Supplies

(CT:GEN-572; 05-20-2021)

To ensure accountability, the Department's approved records systems, the *Integrated Logistics Management System (ILMS)* records, or manual cards, are maintained for all sealing devices, both documentary and safeguarding types, regardless of cost (see [14 FAM 414.3](#), Personal Custody Records). The affixing of the documentary type is under the direct supervision of the signing officer. The affixing of the safeguarding type by authorized employees at posts is under the direction of responsible officers. After business hours, or when not in use, or in the absence of responsible officers, sealing devices are placed in vaults, safes, or safe-file cabinets equipped with three-way combination locks to which only U.S. Government personnel have access. Where such safeguards are not available, the sealing devices are protected in a manner specifically approved in writing by the appropriate regional or resident security officer.

2 FAM 152.3-3 Sealing Device Die Disposal

(CT:GEN-296; 10-01-1999)

Before disposition is made of obsolete, unserviceable, or excess dies on sealing devices, the dies are mutilated beyond recognition to preclude their use by unauthorized persons. This can be accomplished by burning or cutting rubber stamps and by defacing metal dies with a file or hammer. If attached to a metal device, the dies are removed and mutilated; the remainder of the mechanism should be given to the general services officer for disposal.

2 FAM 153 U.S. COAT OF ARMS

(CT:GEN-344; 08-26-2008)

This section primarily concerns itself with the use of the U.S. Coat of Arms (the obverse of the Great Seal of the United States) at Foreign Service posts.

2 FAM 153.1 General

(CT:GEN-296; 10-01-1999)

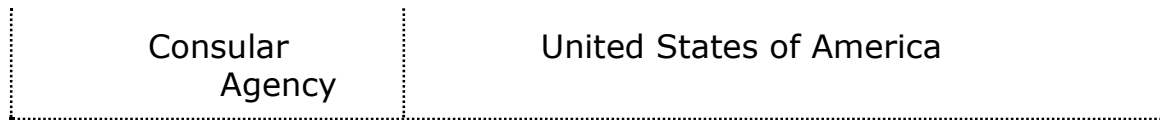
The Coat of Arms of the United States is displayed on stationery, publications, military uniforms, public monuments, public buildings, and other public property issued, owned, or used by the U.S. Government, and in various other connections pertaining to the Federal Government.

2 FAM 153.1-1 Description and Legends

(CT:GEN-303; 04-17-2001)

- a. The U.S. Coat of Arms, as displayed by Foreign Service posts, constitutes a permanent emblem of the authority and property of the United States and is, therefore, a continuing form of protection for that authority and property. The coat of arms of a Foreign Service post consists of the obverse of the Coat of Arms of the United States together with the legend of designation of the post. The normal practice is for the legend to encircle the facsimile of the seal, but the legend may be a separate plaque. The approved legends are as follows:

Embassy	United States of America
Consulate General	United States of America
Consulate	United States of America



b. Any coat of arms bearing a legend other than one of the foregoing is obsolete and should be replaced.

2 FAM 153.1-2 Foreign Language Legends

(CT:GEN-296; 10-01-1999)

Foreign Service posts are also encouraged, although not required, to display the legend of the post in the local language, particularly in countries where the language does not use the Roman alphabet. The legend should not appear in a language other than English on the coat of arms, but it may be displayed on a plaque of conservative size and taste in any appropriate location near the entrance of a building or in some cases near the entrance of the grounds.

2 FAM 153.2 Coat of Arms Display

2 FAM 153.2-1 Embassy

(CT:GEN-296; 10-01-1999)

The coat of arms of the U.S. embassy is placed, whenever possible, above the principal entrance of the diplomatic representative's residence, and the chancery, when it is separate from the residence, unless such procedure is in conflict with local custom. If aesthetic objectives would be better served, or if physical difficulties make placing it above the entrance impractical, the coat of arms may be displayed elsewhere in a location conspicuous to the public.

2 FAM 153.2-2 Consular Offices

(CT:GEN-296; 10-01-1999)

The coat of arms of the consular office is placed at or near the entrance to the office, unless specifically prohibited by the laws of the country.

2 FAM 153.2-3 Combined Offices

(CT:GEN-296; 10-01-1999)

At combined offices, only the coat of arms of the embassy or post is displayed on the outside of the premises.

2 FAM 153.2-4 Exterior Ornamentation

(CT:GEN-296; 10-01-1999)

The Coat of Arms of the United States may be used for exterior ornamentation on diplomatic and consular buildings by means of carved stone, mosaic insets, bronze plaques, etc.

2 FAM 153.2-5 Interior Display

(CT:GEN-296; 10-01-1999)

At the discretion of the principal officer, the U.S. Coat of Arms may be displayed in an appropriate interior area, such as a public reception room.

2 FAM 153.3 Coat of Arms Disposal

(CT:GEN-296; 10-01-1999)

Whenever a post changes status or is abolished, or when diplomatic relations are broken, coats of arms, which are not permanently affixed and which can be removed without extensive damage to the building, are taken down. When a post changes status without disruption of normal functions, the coat of arms bearing the legend of designation is made available to the Department for transfer to another post. If conditions warrant, coats of arms may be destroyed on the premises.

2 FAM 154 FLAGS

2 FAM 154.1 U.S. Flag

(CT:GEN-303; 04-17-2001)

- a. Diplomatic missions have the right, under international law, to display their national flag on the embassy, the ambassador's office, and the ambassador's residence. Accordingly, chiefs of mission are responsible to ensure that the national flag is prominently displayed daily, weather permitting, on or near the building or buildings housing the mission.
- b. Consular conventions and international custom authorize display of the national flag on consular posts. Principal officers are responsible to ensure that the flag is prominently displayed daily, weather permitting, on or near the building housing the consular post. Posts maintaining no staff on regular duty on days the office is closed to business may limit the daily display of the flag to normal working days and holidays.

- c. Posts may refrain from exterior display of the flag when, in the judgment of the principal officer, local conditions make it temporarily inadvisable.

2 FAM 154.2 Other Flags

2 FAM 154.2-1 Foreign Service Flags

(CT:GEN-344; 08-26-2008)

- a. Foreign Service flags (see [2 FAM Exhibit 154.2](#)) for interior and automobile display have been designated for use by:
- (1) Ambassadors and ministers accredited to sovereign foreign governments as chiefs of U.S. diplomatic missions (embassies);
 - (2) Chiefs of other Department of State diplomatic missions (e.g., USUN, USRO);
 - (3) Accredited diplomatic officers other than the chief of mission (automobile flag only); and
 - (4) Consular officers in charge of consular posts.
- b. The Foreign Service flag of the principal officer at a Foreign Service post is displayed, with the U.S. flag, in the office of the principal officer. The flag of the principal officer also is displayed with the U.S. flag in the main reception-entrance area at a consular post. The interior display of flags at Foreign Service posts is prescribed in [2 FAM 154.3-2](#). The display of the U.S. flag and Foreign Service flags on automobiles is prescribed in [2 FAM 154.3-3](#).

2 FAM 154.2-2 POW and/or MIA Flag

(CT:GEN-572; 05-20-2021)

The POW and/or MIA flag (see [2 FAM Exhibit 154.2](#)) is the National League of Families POW and/or MIA flag recognized officially and designated by [36 U.S.C. 902](#). See [2 FAM 155](#) for information on displaying the flag on holidays and other occasions.

2 FAM 154.3 Specifications

2 FAM 154.3-1 Exterior Display

(CT:GEN-303; 04-17-2001)

The U.S. flag regularly flown on the building or grounds of a Foreign Service post should be 5 x 9 1/2 feet, unless a larger or smaller flag is desirable because of the size of the staff or the building, or the location of the staff in the building. The flag flown on holidays may be larger than that used for regular exterior display.

2 FAM 154.3-2 Flags for Interior Display

(CT:GEN-344; 08-26-2008)

U.S. flags and Foreign Service flags for display are 2 feet 11 inches x 5 feet 6 inches in size. Staffs are approximately 8 feet in height. Both the U.S. flag for display in the office of the chief of mission and in the main reception entrance to the mission is of extra-fine quality, with gilt fringe, cords, and tassels; the staff for the U.S. flag is surmounted with a gilt eagle; and that for the Foreign Service flag with a gilt spearhead. U.S. flags and Foreign Service flags and their staffs, used for other interior display, are plain.

2 FAM 154.3-3 Automobile Flags

(CT:GEN-303; 04-17-2001)

U.S. flags and Foreign Service flags for automobile display are 12 by 18 inches. Staffs are of a length to assure that the flags fly free from the vehicle. U.S. and Foreign Service flags of different sizes are never displayed simultaneously.

2 FAM 154.4 Requisitioning

(CT:GEN-303; 04-17-2001)

Requisition from the General Services Administration (GSA) all U.S. flags and Foreign Service flags, flag staffs, bases, eagles, and spearheads. Although automobile fender flag staff sets are not stocked by GSA, GSA will still procure them for post, upon receipt of a FEDSTRIP-coded requisition. Post may also procure the automobile fender flag set, directly from a commercial vendor.

2 FAM 155 DISPLAYING FLAGS ON HOLIDAYS AND OTHER OCCASIONS

2 FAM 155.1 U.S. Holidays

(CT:GEN-572; 05-20-2021)

The U.S. flag is displayed outside, weather permitting, at Foreign Service posts. Main State and posts must fly the U.S. flag on the following national holidays and days which have been designated by acts of Congress or by presidential proclamation as flag days:

New Year's Day	January 1
Inauguration Day (every 4th year)	January 20
Martin Luther King's Birthday*	Third Monday in January
Lincoln's Birthday	February 12
Presidents' Day	Third Monday in February
Easter Sunday	(Variable)
Mother's Day	Second Sunday in May
Peace Officers Memorial Day	May 15
Armed Forces Day	Third Saturday in May
Memorial Day	Last Monday in May
Flag Day	June 14
Independence Day	July 4
Labor Day	First Monday in September
Patriot Day	September 11
Constitution Day	September 17
National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Day	Variable
Columbus Day	Second Monday in October

Navy Day	October 27
Veterans Day	November 11
Thanksgiving Day	Fourth Thursday in November
Remembrance of Pearl Harbor	December 7
Christmas Day	December 25

And in other American Republics on:

Pan American Day	April 14
Pan American Aviation Day	December 17

- b. Foreign Service posts also display the U.S. flag on such other days as the President may proclaim.
- c. At the Department's headquarters (Main State, HST Building), the POW/MIA flag is publicly displayed on *all days on which the flag of the United States is displayed*.

2 FAM 155.2 Occasions Other Than U.S. Holidays

2 FAM 155.2-1 Host Country Holidays

(CT:GEN-307; 08-14-2003)

- a. The U.S. flag may be displayed:
- (1) On the local holidays of the country or city in which a Foreign Service post is located;
 - (2) When requested by the national or local authorities;
 - (3) When required by custom; or
 - (4) At the discretion of the principal officer.
- b. The management officer at each post maintains a list of such holidays, plus a summary of all other flag days, in a special folder.

2 FAM 155.2-2 Holidays of Other Sovereign States

(CT:GEN-303; 04-17-2001)

It is sometimes the custom at Foreign Service posts to display the U.S. flag on the various national holidays of the sovereign states maintaining missions or consulates in the same city. Verify this by consulting with the dean of the diplomatic corps, who also may be called upon to furnish lists of such holidays if the information is not available directly from the resident representatives of those states.

2 FAM 155.2-3 Other Occasions

(CT:GEN-296; 10-01-1999)

- a. The flag is flown daily for 1 month at half-staff during a period of national mourning, as for the death of the President.
- b. At the discretion of the officer in charge, or as requested by the dean of the diplomatic or consular corps or by local authorities, the flag may be displayed during the visits of high national or foreign officials.
- c. An especially important use of the flag at Foreign Service posts may be its prominent display intended to protect U.S. citizens and property from molestation, as an emblem of authority.
- d. The flag may be used to cover a veteran's casket at a funeral. The flag may also be used to cover the casket of a deceased U.S. citizen Foreign or Civil Service employee pending completion of arrangements for transportation of the remains or up to the time of burial if burial takes place at the post.
- e. The U.S. flag may be used on vehicles, carried in a parade, or placed on or near a speaker's platform.

2 FAM 155.3 Displaying the U.S. Flag

(CT:GEN-296; 10-01-1999)

- a. When the flag is displayed on a staff, the blue field is in the position nearest the peak of the staff; on a halyard, the blue field is uppermost.
- b. When the flag is hung vertically over the middle of the street, the blue field is toward the north in an east and west street, or toward the east in a north and south street. If the flag is displayed between a house and a pole at the curb so that it hangs over the sidewalk, the blue field is toward the pole.
- c. When the flag is displayed flat against the wall, the blue field is the upper left-hand corner as viewed by an audience looking toward the wall.
- d. When displayed in a public auditorium, the flag may be placed on the speaker's platform; if displayed flat, it is

above and behind the speaker, but if displayed from a staff it stands in a position of honor to the speaker's right as when facing the audience. When displayed in a public auditorium but not on the speaker's platform, the flag is placed before and to the right of the audience.

2 FAM 155.4 Displaying the U.S. Flag at Half-Staff During a Period of Mourning

2 FAM 155.4-1 State Department Procedures

(CT:GEN-444; 06-16-2015)

- a. The Secretary has delegated to the Assistant Secretary of State for Administration the authority to decide to lower the American flag to half-staff in certain instances. Upon the death of a current or former official, or due to other tragic circumstances, lowering the flag to half-staff can be initiated in four ways:
 - (1) Automatically, as specified in the governing authorities;
 - (2) By the President;
 - (3) By the Secretary of State or his or her designee; or
 - (4) By a chief of mission abroad;
- b. The Assistant Secretary for Administration (A) has been delegated responsibility for the overall management of this policy and for notifying all Department of State domestic and overseas locations of the requirement to display the flag at half-staff under circumstances initiated by law, by the President, or by the Secretary of State. Chiefs of mission abroad are delegated authority for events originating at post. The Secretary of State, Deputy Secretary, and Under Secretary for Management also may exercise these delegated authorities.

2 FAM 155.4-2 Procedures Initiated by Law

2 FAM 155.4-2(A) Domestic Locations

(CT:GEN-344; 08-26-2008)

- a. In most instances, Presidential Proclamation 3044; [2 FAM 155.6-2](#), When Used for Mourning; and 4 U.S.C.7(m) prescribe when and where flags are to be lowered to half-staff.
- b. If the General Services Administration (GSA) Administrator determines that the Washington metropolitan area should lower flags, GSA notifies the National Capital Region Administrator, who then instructs personnel at GSA-

leased and U.S. Government-owned buildings to lower flags to half-staff.

2 FAM 155.4-2(B) Locations Abroad

(CT:GEN-344; 08-26-2008)

- a. According to the authorities cited in [2 FAM 155.4-2\(A\)](#), paragraph a, there is only one instance when our flags overseas are automatically lowered to half-staff: upon the death of a President or a former President. In all other instances, the President, the Secretary, or a designee must specifically direct that the flags overseas be lowered.
- b. During normal duty hours, A/OPR will draft a cable, cleared by A and S/ES-O, instructing posts to lower flags. During off-duty hours, the DAS for A/OPR or a designee will contact S/ES-O to issue a standard cable to notify posts.

2 FAM 155.4-3 Procedures Initiated by the President

2 FAM 155.4-3(A) Domestic Locations

(CT:GEN-344; 08-26-2008)

- a. In situations not covered by the authorities cited in [2 FAM 155.4-2\(A\)](#), paragraph a, the President can direct the Executive Clerk to issue a Proclamation or Executive Order stating that flags should be flown at half-staff. The Proclamation or Executive Order gives the length of time and the locations where flags are to be lowered and is published in the Federal Register.
- b. The GSA administrator receives a copy of the President's proclamation and determines which of the 10 regions should lower flags.
- c. If the GSA administrator determines that the Washington metropolitan area should lower flags, GSA notifies the National Capital Region administrator, who then instructs personnel at GSA-leased and U.S. Government-owned buildings to lower flags to half-staff.

2 FAM 155.4-3(B) Locations Abroad

(CT:GEN-344; 08-26-2008)

- a. During normal duty hours, the Executive Clerk to the President will phone the Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS) for the Office of Operations (A/OPR) when overseas flags are to be lowered. She/he will also send a copy of the Proclamation or Executive Order to the Department. After duty hours, she/he will call the Operations Center,

- senior watch officer. The Operations Center will then contact the DAS for A/OPR or the A bureau duty officer.
- b. During normal duty hours, A/OPR will draft a cable, cleared by A and S/ES-O, instructing posts to lower flags. During off-duty hours, the DAS for A/OPR or a designee will contact S/ES-O to issue a standard cable to notify posts.

2 FAM 155.4-4 Procedures Initiated by the Secretary of State

2 FAM 155.4-4(A) Special Instances

(CT:GEN-444; 06-16-2015)

- a. The authorities cited in [2 FAM 155.4-2\(A\)](#), paragraph a, authorize the heads of the various departments and agencies of the U.S. Government to direct that the U.S. flag be flown at half-staff at locations under their control in special instances.
- b. When the Secretary of State or the designee (normally the Assistant Secretary for Administration) determines that the Department's flags should be flown at half-staff, the Office of the Executive Secretary will be notified during duty hours, and the senior watch officer will be notified during off-duty hours.
- c. The Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS) for Operations (A/OPR) is then notified by the A Bureau during duty hours, or S/ES-O during off-duty hours.
- d. A/OPR notifies Diplomatic Security to have staff lower the flags at Department of State controlled buildings.
- e. During normal duty hours, A/OPR will draft a cable, cleared by A, instructing posts to lower flags. During off-duty hours, the DAS for A/OPR or a designee works with S/ES-O to issue a standard cable to notify posts.
- f. On occasion, flags may be lowered to half-staff in only one country or a group of countries (i.e., NATO countries). In these instances, the country desk involved will draft an action memorandum and cable for approval by the Secretary or the designee, the Assistant Secretary for Administration, requesting that flags be lowered in the country or group of countries in question.

2 FAM 155.4-4(B) Cases of Catastrophic Events

(CT:GEN-444; 06-16-2015)

- a. The Department has determined that the flag will be globally lowered rarely, only in cases of catastrophic events, such as embassy attacks that result in mass casualties.
- b. In the past, Department policy directed chiefs of mission to lower the flag under very limited circumstances.

These were:

- (1) Upon issuance of any official proclamation authorizing flying the flag at half-staff issued by a host country; and
 - (2) When the principal officer at a Foreign Service post dies at the post.
- c. Individual missions now are directed to lower the flag in three additional circumstances. These are:
- (1) When any employee (regardless of employment category or nationality) under Chief of Mission Authority at their post is killed in the line of duty;
 - (2) When a U.S. citizen is killed by hostile action directed against the United States (for instance, Peace Corps volunteers, humanitarian workers, etc.); and
 - (3) When a local national employed in another U.S. mission as a third-country national locally employed staff (LE staff) dies in the line of duty.
- d. Flags may be flown at half-staff from the day of death, for a period of 3 days, or in accordance with recognized customs.
- e. The assistant secretary for the respective regional bureau must be notified through official channels of the name, title, and circumstances of the individual(s) to be honored when a decision is made by the chief of mission to bestow this mark of respect at locations abroad.

2 FAM 155.4-5 Procedures Initiated by the Chief of Mission

(CT:GEN-344; 08-26-2008)

- a. Upon the issuance of any official proclamation authorizing flying the flag at half-staff issued by a host country, the chief of mission is delegated authority to display the U.S. flag at half-staff during the decreed period of mourning or, if no specific period is prescribed, from the day of death through the day of interment, as provided in [2 FAM 155.4](#).
- b. When the principal officer of a Foreign Service post dies at the post, the flag may be flown at half-staff from the day of death through the day of interment or the day the body begins its journey to another locality for interment, as provided in [2 FAM 155.6-2](#), paragraph e.
- c. The Assistant Secretary for Administration must be notified through official channels of the name, title, and circumstances of the individual to be honored when a decision is made by post to bestow this mark of respect at locations abroad.

2 FAM 155.5 Displaying the U.S. Flag With Other Flags

(CT:GEN-444; 06-16-2015)

- a. The only flag or pennant that may be displayed above the U.S. flag is the church pennant, which is flown above the flag during divine services aboard a U.S. war vessel.
- b. When flown with flags or pennants of non-sovereign entities, such as cities, states, or clubs, the U.S. flag is above them on a halyard, at the right of a group of staffs to the viewer's left, or otherwise accorded the honor position. When the flag is displayed to the speaker's right on a platform of a public auditorium, any non-sovereign flag on the platform is displayed to the speaker's left. When the flag is not on the speaker's platform but is displayed before and to the right of the audience, any non-sovereign flag is displayed before and to the left of the audience.
- c. When flown with flags of other sovereign nations, the U.S. flag is always accorded strict equality; no flag is displayed higher than any other, and all are of the same size if possible. On U.S. Government premises, the U.S. flag is accorded the position of honor by being placed first in the line up (on the left when facing the display) of a group of sovereign flags, displayed in alphabetical order with a second U.S. flag in the line-up. However, in a display not on U.S. Government premises, the flag of the host country may be accorded the honor position among a group of flags of sovereign nations.

2 FAM 155.6 Care and Protocols of U.S. Flag

2 FAM 155.6-1 General Care

(CT:GEN-344; 08-26-2008)

- a. The flag is treated with honor and respect. It is not displayed in severe stormy weather nor allowed to touch the ground when being hoisted or lowered. The flag is never used for a costume or as a draping, nor shall any lettering or other object be placed on it.
- b. When not in use, roll the flag on a staff or fold it into a small triangle with only the blue field showing on the outside. When the flag is damp, hang it up flat until dry, then roll it on the staff or properly fold it.
- c. Display only clean, undamaged flags. Privately burn flags that have become torn or badly faded. Posts should maintain a supply of flags adequate to permit immediate retirement of flags that become damaged.
- d. When diplomatic relations are broken, take care to ensure that all flags are either carefully packed for shipment or burned before personnel leave the post.

2 FAM 155.6-2 When Used for Mourning

(CT:GEN-344; 08-26-2008)

- a. Show official mourning by displaying the flag at half-staff. See also [2 FAM Exhibit 155.4-1](#) on the display of the U.S. flag at half-staff upon the death of certain officials and former officials.
- b. The flag is draped only when a Presidential declaration of national mourning so provides. A standard parade-size flag on a staff is draped by attaching at the peak of the staff two streamers of black crepe, 7 feet long x 12 inches wide, tied in a bow; flags displayed on halyards or on walls are first raised to the peak then lowered to the half-staff position; in the evening the flag is raised briefly to the peak before being lowered.
- c. On Memorial Day, the flag is flown at half-staff (but not draped) from sunrise to noon, then at the peak from noon until sunset.
- d. When the host government decrees official mourning upon the death of a head of state or other foreign dignitary, Foreign Service posts fly the U.S. flag at half-staff during the decreed period of mourning, or, if no specific period is prescribed, from the day of death through the day of interment.
- e. When the principal officer at a Foreign Service post dies at the post, the flag may be flown at half-staff from the day of death through the day of interment or the day the body begins its journey to another locality for interment.

2 FAM 155.6-3 Covering a Casket

(CT:GEN-344; 08-26-2008)

When used to cover a casket, place the flag so that the union is at the head and over the left shoulder of the deceased. The flag is not lowered into the grave or allowed to touch the ground.

2 FAM 155.6-4 Civilian Salute to the Flag

2 FAM 155.6-4(A) How To Salute

(CT:GEN-344; 08-26-2008)

A man salutes by removing his hat with his right hand and holding it over his heart. A woman, or a man without a hat, salutes by placing the right hand over the heart. A person saluting should stand at attention and face the object being saluted. While the national anthem is being played and there is no flag displayed, the salute is rendered toward the music. If a salute is to be held only momentarily, as in a salute to a flag passing in a parade or review, a man removes his hat, dips it toward his heart, then replaces it upon his head.

2 FAM 155.6-4(B) Flag and National Anthem

(CT:GEN-344; 08-26-2008)

Civilians salute the U.S. flag while it is being raised or lowered, or while it is passing in parade or review. They salute while the national anthem is being played, whether in the presence of the flag or not. However, render salutes to the flag and the national anthem only out-of-doors. Indoors, one should stand at attention while the anthem is played or sung.

2 FAM 155.6-4(C) Naval Vessels, Honor Guards, and Reviews

(CT:GEN-344; 08-26-2008)

Civilians salute the flag when boarding a naval vessel and when leaving it, and they return the salute of the honor guard, if any. These are momentary salutes, as are the many rendered by civilians reviewing troops.

2 FAM 155.6-4(D) Saluting Flags and National Anthems of Other Nations

(CT:GEN-344; 08-26-2008)

Members of the Foreign Service salute the flags and national anthems of other nations under the same circumstances and in the same manner as prescribed for saluting the U.S. flag and national anthem.

2 FAM 155.6-4(E) Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

(CT:GEN-368; 03-01-2010)

a. Congress has designated the following pledge of allegiance to the flag:

“I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”

b. Civilians render the pledge the same way as saluting the U.S. flag ([2 FAM 155.6-4\(A\)](#)). Persons in uniform render the military salute.

2 FAM 155.7 Interior Display of Flags at Foreign Service Posts

2 FAM 155.7-1 Office of Principal Officer

(CT:GEN-344; 08-26-2008)

a. The U.S. flag is displayed at a mission with the Foreign Service flag of the chief of mission, and at a consular office with the flag for consular officers. The U.S. flag is displayed on a staff to the right (officer's right) of the

desk of the principal officer, and the Foreign Service flag on a staff of equal height to the left of the desk.

- b. At combined posts, the U.S. flag and the flag for consular officers may be displayed in the office of the officer in charge of the consular section.

2 FAM 155.7-2 Mission's Main Reception Entrance

(CT:GEN-344; 08-26-2008)

The U.S. flag and the Foreign Service flag of the chief of mission are displayed on staffs of equal height in the main reception entrance of the mission. The U.S. flag is displayed to the left and the Foreign Service flag to the right of a person entering the building.

2 FAM 155.7-3 Consular Office's Public Waiting Room

(CT:GEN-344; 08-26-2008)

Display the U.S. flag and the consular officer flag on staffs of equal height in the main public waiting-room area at a consular post. Display the U.S. flag at the right (waiting audience's right) front of the room, as determined by the arrangement of waiting-room seating facilities, and the consular flag to the left front of the room.

2 FAM 155.7-4 Other Areas and Offices at Foreign Service Posts

(CT:GEN-344; 08-26-2008)

- a. Display the U.S. flag on a staff in any room or office within a Foreign Service post in which the administration of oaths is a regularly performed function.
- b. Posts may display the U.S. flag in any office, reception, or waiting room, or other area within a Foreign Service post where its display is considered by the principal officer to be appropriate to the room or area.

2 FAM 155.8 Displaying the U.S. Flag and Officer's Flag on Automobiles

(CT:GEN-344; 08-26-2008)

- a. Both the U.S. flag and the Foreign Service flag of the principal officer may be displayed on the automobile used by the principal officer on official business, including attendance at ceremonial functions and on official travel in the country or consular district of assignment. As a general rule, the principal officer follows the clear dictates of established local custom in determining whether and when flags are to be displayed on the automobile, except when an emergency situation may warrant their display for reasons of personal safety.

- b. At missions, the chief of mission, in the chief of mission's discretion and following the clear dictates of established local custom, may prescribe the display of the U.S. flag and the diplomatic officer's automobile flag on vehicles occupied by officers of the chief of mission's staff when, representing the chief of mission, they attend important ceremonial or other official functions. Such display of automobile flags may also be determined by the chief of mission to be warranted in circumstances of emergency for reasons of personal safety.
- c. For automobile display, the U.S. flag is flown from a staff affixed to the right front fender or the right side of the front bumper of the vehicle. The Foreign Service flag is flown from the left front fender or the left side of the front bumper. When the principal officer does not occupy the vehicle, the flags are either removed from the vehicle or rolled and hooded on their staffs.

2 FAM 156 THROUGH 159 UNASSIGNED

2 FAM Exhibit 155.4-1

PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATIONS ON FLAG DISPLAY

(CT:GEN-344; 08-26-2008)

PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION 3044

Display of the Flag of the United States of America at Half-Staff Upon the Death of Certain Officials and Former Officials

WHEREAS it is appropriate that the flag of the United States of America be flown at half-staff on Federal Buildings, grounds, and facilities upon the death of principal officials of the Government of the United States and the Governors of the States, Territories, and possessions of the United States as a mark of respect to their memory; and

WHEREAS it is desirable that rules be prescribed for the uniform observance of this mark of respect by all executive departments and agencies of the Government, and as a guide to the people of the Nation generally on such occasions;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER, President of the United States of America and Commander in Chief of the armed forces of the United States, do hereby prescribe and proclaim the following rules with respect to the display of the flag of the United States of America at half-staff upon the death of the officials hereinafter designated:

1. The flag of the United States shall be flown at half-staff on all buildings, grounds, and naval vessels of the Federal Government in the District of Columbia and throughout the United States and its Territories and possessions for the period indicated upon the death of any of the following- designated officials or former officials of the United States:

(a) The President or a former President: for thirty days from the day of death.

The flag shall also be flown at half-staff for such period at all United States embassies, legations, and other facilities abroad, including military facilities and naval vessels and stations.

(b) The Vice President, the Chief Justice or a retired Chief Justice of the United States, or the Speaker of the House of Representatives: for 10 days from the day of death.

(c) An Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, a member of the Cabinet, a former Vice-President, the Secretary of the Army, the Secretary of the Navy, or the Secretary of the Air Force: from the day of death until interment.

2. The flag of the United States shall be flown at half-staff on all buildings, grounds, and naval vessels of the

Federal Government in the metropolitan area of the District of Columbia on the day of death and on the following day upon the death of a United States Senator, Representative, Territorial Delegate, or the Resident Commissioner from the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and it shall also be flown at half-staff on all buildings, grounds, and naval vessels of the Federal Government in the State, Congressional District, Territory, or Commonwealth of such Senator, Representative, Delegate, or Commissioner, respectively, from the day of death until interment.

3. The flag of the United States shall be flown at half-staff on all buildings and grounds of the Federal Government in a State, Territory, or possession of the United States upon the death of the Governor of such State, Territory, or possession from the day of death until interment.
4. In the event of the death of other officials, former officials, or foreign dignitaries, the flag of the United States shall be displayed at half-staff in accordance with such orders or instructions as may be issued by or at the direction of the President, or in accordance with recognized customs or practices not inconsistent with law.
5. The heads of the several departments and agencies of the Government may direct that the flag of the United States be flown at half-staff on buildings, grounds, or naval vessels under their jurisdiction on occasions other than those specified herein which they consider proper, and that suitable military honors be rendered as appropriate.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the United States of America to be affixed.

DONE at the City of Washington this 1st day of March in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and fifty four, and the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and seventy-eighth.

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

By the President:

Walter B. Smith

Acting Secretary of State

36 U.S.C. 175

PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION 3948

Amending Proclamation No. 3044 With Respect to Display of The Flag of the United States of America at Half-Staff

Upon the Death of Certain Officials and Former Officials

By the President of The United States

A Proclamation

I, RICHARD NIXON, President of the United States of America and Commander in Chief of the armed forces of the United States, do hereby proclaim that Proclamation No. 3044 of March 1, 1954, prescribing rules with respect to the display of the flag of the United States of America at half-staff upon the death of certain officials, is amended by substituting for subsection (c) of section 1 thereof the following:

“(c) An Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, a member of the Cabinet, a former Vice President, the President pro tempore of the Senate, the Majority Leader of the Senate, the Minority Leader of the Senate, the Majority Leader of the House of Representatives, or the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives: from the day of death until interment.”

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twelfth day of December, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and sixty-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and ninety fourth.

/s/ RICHARD NIXON

36 U.S.C. 176

2 FAM Exhibit 154.2 FOREIGN SERVICE FLAGS

(CT:GEN-344; 08-26-2008)

CHIEF OF DIPLOMATIC MISSION FLAG



- a. This flag is for the use of chiefs of Department of State diplomatic missions other than those accredited to sovereign foreign governments (e.g., USUN, USRO, NATO, etc.).
- b. The design consists of a white background bearing the Seal of the United States set in the center and encircled by 13 blue stars.
- c. This flag may be used for interior and automobile display.

AMBASSADOR'S OR MINISTER'S FLAG



- a. This flag is for the use of ambassadors and ministers accredited to sovereign foreign governments as chiefs of U.S. diplomatic missions (embassies and legations).
- b. The design consists of a blue background bearing the U.S. Seal set in a white circle in the center and encircled by 13 white stars.
- c. This flag may be used for interior and automobile display.

DIPLOMATIC OFFICER'S FLAG

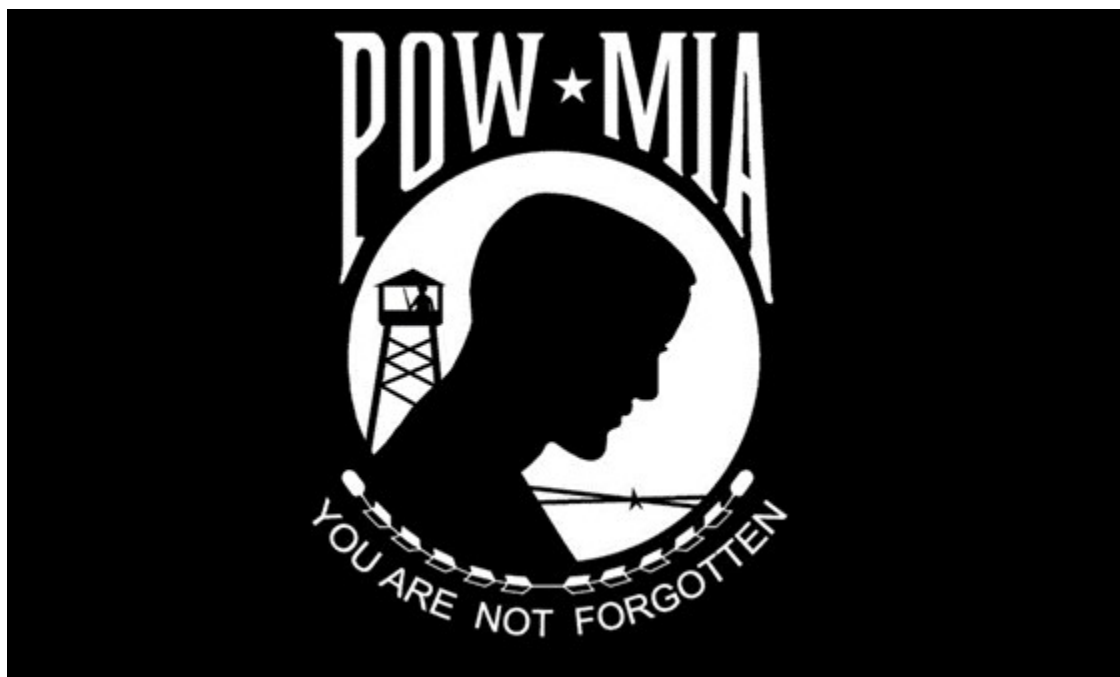


- a. This flag is for the use of diplomatic officers other than the chief of mission.
- b. The design consists of a blue background bearing encircled by 13 white stars set in the center.
- c. This flag may be used for automobile display only.

CONSULAR FLAG

- a. This flag is for the use of consular officers in charge of consular posts.
- b. The design consists of a blue background bearing the letter "C" in white in the center encircled by 13 white stars.
- c. This flag may be used for interior and automobile display.

POW/MIA FLAG



- a. The POW-MIA States flag is the one prescribed by legislation.
- b. This flag is used for exterior display.

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