

City of St. John's Corporate and Operational Policy Manual

Procedure Title: Flag Protocol Procedures	
Authorizing Policy: 09-16-01 Protocol Policy	
Procedure #: 09-16-01-01	
Last Revision Date: September 8, 2025	Procedure Sponsor: City Clerk

1. Procedure Statement

The purpose of this document is to provide clear direction for the display, half-masting and care of flags used by the City of St. John's on and/or in City properties.

Note: Requests by outside organizations for flag raisings should refer to the "Requests by Outside Organizations/Individuals Procedures".

2. Definitions

Flag Protocol – Addresses topics such as the order of precedence in which flags are flown, half-masting requirements and procedures, and the disposal of flags.

Half-Masting – Flags are flown at half-mast as a symbol of mourning, to commemorate significant dates such as Remembrance Day, or to observe solemn events.

Protocol – Written and unwritten convention, etiquette, and rules guiding interaction and communication.

3. Procedure Requirements

3.1 Flag Precedence

The order of precedence for flags is:

- The National Flag of Canada
- The Flag of Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) (within NL)
- The flags of other sovereign nations in alphabetical order (if applicable)
- The flags of the provinces of Canada (in the order in which they joined Confederation) (where applicable)
 - Ontario
 - Quebec
 - Nova Scotia
 - New Brunswick
 - Manitoba
 - British Columbia
 - Prince Edward Island
 - Saskatchewan
 - Alberta
 - Newfoundland and Labrador (outside of NL)
- The flags of the territories of Canada (in the order in which they joined Confederation) (where applicable)
 - Northwest Territories
 - Yukon
 - Nunavut
- The flags of municipalities/cities
- Banners of organizations
- Historical flags

3.1.1 Standards: It is important to note that the following flags take precedence over the National Flag on buildings where one of the dignitaries is in residence or where they are attending a function:

- Her Majesty's Personal Canadian Flag;
- the standards of members of the Royal Family;
- the standard of the Governor General; and
- the standard of the Lieutenant Governor (in his or her province of jurisdiction and when assuming the duties of the representative of the Queen).

Flag Precedence from the Point of View of the Spectators Facing the Flags	
Two flags	The flag which has most precedence shall be on the left.
Three flags	The flag which has most precedence shall be in the centre, second ranking at the left, and third ranking on the right.
Four flags or more	The flag which has most precedence is on the left; the other flags in order of precedence from left to right. Order of Precedence when displaying flags in Newfoundland and Labrador, when the Union Flag is being displayed: 1. Royal or Vice Regal Standards 2. Canadian Flag 3. Newfoundland and Labrador Flag 4. Flags from other countries 5. Provincial Flags (in order of entry into Confederation) 6. Territorial Flags (in order of entry into Confederation) 7. Union Flag 8. Municipal Flag(s) 9. Others (Organizational or Historical Banners)

3.1.2 Prohibitions

Except for the Canadian flag, national flags shall not be flown unless a dignitary of that nation is officially visiting or present at a City-hosted event.

3.2 Manner of Flying

Flags flown at City Hall shall be checked monthly to ensure that they are in good repair and shall be replaced as required. Flags at other City buildings shall be checked as designated by the City Clerk.

Flagpoles are to be maintained, painted and replaced as required.

3.2.1 Height of Flag Staffs and Flag Sizes: Flag staffs mounted together shall be of the same height. The length of a flag staff will help determine the flag size to be flown from it. The following dimensions are a guide to selecting the appropriate flag size:

Flagstaff Height	Flag Size
17 to 20 feet 5.1 to 6 meters	3 x 6 feet 0.9 x 1.8 meters

30 to 35 feet 9 to 10.5 meters	4.5 x 9 feet 1.40 x 2.8 meters
40 to 45 feet 12 to 13.5 meters	6 x 12 feet 1.8 x 3.6 meters
50 feet 15 meters	7.5 x 15 feet 2.3 x 4.6 meters

3.2.2 Flags flown together: Where two or more flags are flown together, all flags shall be the same size and flown at the same height.

Two flags shall not be flown on the same staff except where the pennant or banner of an organization is flown to mark a special occasion, it may be flown on the same staff but beneath a flag if no other arrangement can be made.

3.2.3 Hours of hoisting: Flags may be flown daily from sunrise to sunset. When flown at night, flag(s) shall be illuminated, where possible.

3.2.4 Order of hoisting and lowering: When one or more flag is to be flown, all the flags shall be hoisted and lowered together but if that is not possible, then the senior flag shall be hoisted, followed by the next ranking flag, and so on. When the flags are to be lowered, the junior flag shall be lowered first, followed by the next ranking, and so forth, the most senior flag being lowered last.

3.3 Flag Displays

Flags may be placed flat against the wall, horizontally or vertically.

When used:

- on a speaker's platform, including at a place of worship – a flag shall be displayed to the right of the speakers or clergy.
- in the body of the auditorium or place of worship – a flag shall be displayed to the right of the audience or worshippers.
- horizontally flat against the wall, at rear of platform – a flag shall be above the speaker.

Flags used as an unveiling drape for monuments, tablets, pictures or caskets, shall be properly draped and prevented from falling to the ground or floor.

Flags may never be used to cover a speaker's table or drape the front of a platform. Under no circumstances may a flag be allowed to touch the floor.

3.4 Half-Masting

Flags are flown at half-mast as a sign of respect during a period of mourning following a death.

As noted in the policy, flags shall not be flown on the courtesy pole during periods of half-masting. If an event occurs requiring half-masting while a flag is flying on the courtesy pole, the flag on the courtesy pole shall be removed during the half-masting period.

3.4.1 Manner of Half-Masting: Flags shall only be half-masted on those flag staffs fitted with halyards and pulleys. When a flag is flown at the half-mast position or lowered from it, it is first raised to the full-mast height and then lowered.

Flags flown from some buildings on horizontal or angled poles, without halyards, to which flags are permanently attached shall not be half-masted.

3.4.2 Position of Flag: The position of the flag at half-mast will depend on its size, the size and length of the flag staff, and its location but, as a general rule, the centre of the flag shall be exactly half-way down the staff. When two or more flags are flown together all flags shall be half-masted.

3.5 Occasions of Half-Masting

Subject to special instructions from the Office of the City Clerk or unless otherwise specified, the flags shall be flown at half-mast at City Hall, and other City buildings as designated by the City Clerk, from the notification of death to sunset the day of the funeral/memorial service, on the death of:

- The Sovereign or Sovereign's family (first degree only, i.e., husband or wife, son or daughter, father, mother, brother or sister)
- The Governor General of Canada or a former Governor General

- The Lieutenant-Governor of Newfoundland and Labrador or a former Lieutenant-Governor of Newfoundland and Labrador
- The Prime Minister of Canada or a former Prime Minister
- The Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador or a former Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador
- A current Member of the House of Commons/Senate (whose district includes St. John's or a part thereof)
- A current Member of the House of Assembly (whose district includes St. John's or a part thereof)
- A member of Canada's military fallen in the line of duty (Newfoundland and Labrador born or based)
- Current Mayor or Member of Council
- Former Mayors or Members of Council (including those of former municipalities now included in City)
- Employee death in the line of duty or by reason of the position occupied

3.5.1 Exceptional Circumstances: Flags may be flown at half-mast as a result of a significant event or circumstance. Should such an occasion arise, consultation shall be held with the Mayor's office, and may be held with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador Protocol Office, to determine the appropriate response, coordinated by the Office of the City Clerk.

3.6 Annual Commemorative Days

The following days have been approved as annual commemorative days. Notification shall be issued via email by the Office of the City Clerk. Flags shall be at half-mast from sunrise to sunset (except as noted for July 1) as follows:

Date	Occasion
April 28	National Day of Mourning for Persons Killed or Injured in the Workplace
June 23	National Day of Remembrance for Victims of Terrorism
July 1	Memorial Day (Sunrise to Noon Only)
September	Firefighters' National Memorial Day (Second Sunday of the Month)

September	Police and Peace Officer's National Memorial Day (Last Sunday of the Month)
November 11	Remembrance Day
December 6	National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

3.6.1 Statutory Holidays and Weekends: Should an unforeseen half-masting be required during a statutory holiday, Department of Public Works officials shall be notified of the half-masting directive by the Office of the City Clerk via email.

Where the City does not have round-the-clock security, it is permissible to lower the flag(s) to half-mast on the Friday evening at close of business and raise the flags again to full-mast on the following Monday morning in an effort to minimize overtime costs accrued.

3.7 Care of Flags and Standards

3.7.1 Repairing: Should fraying or tearing of a flag occur, it shall be repaired at once to avoid further damage; if the appearance after repair is not presentable, it shall be replaced.

3.7.2 Disposal: When a flag becomes tattered and is no longer in a suitable condition for use, it shall be destroyed in a dignified way.

A flag is considered to be tattered or worn when the colour has faded, it has developed a hole, or the outermost seam (fly) of the flag has become frayed.

Disposal of such flags may be handled in the following manner:

- Flags made of natural fibres (wool, cotton, linen) shall be burned in a dignified manner; privately without ceremony or public attention being drawn to the destruction of the material. It is not considered an act of disrespect to burn an unserviceable flag.
- Flags made of synthetic material (nylon or polyester) shall be respectfully torn into strips, with each element of the flag reduced to a single colour, so that the remaining pieces do not resemble a flag. The individual pieces shall then be placed in a bag for disposal – the shreds of fabric shall not be re-used.

4. Application

This procedure applies to all flags that are flown at City Hall (and at other City buildings, as designated by the City Clerk).

5. Responsibilities

As noted in the Protocol Policy 09-06-01, the development and interpretation of policies and procedures for flying and displaying of flags is the responsibility of the Office of the City Clerk.

The Department of Public Works, as the department responsible for City infrastructure, is responsible for procedure implementation, where applicable.

6. References

- 09-16-01 Protocol Policy
- [National Flag of Canada Etiquette](#)
- 09-16-01-02 Requests by Outside Organizations/Individuals Procedures

7. Approval

- Procedure Sponsor / Owner: City Clerk
- Procedure Writer: Policy Analyst
- Date of Approval from Senior Executive Committee: November 2, 2018
- Date of Amendment Approval from Senior Executive Committee: January 25, 2019

8. Monitoring and Contravention

The Office of the City Clerk shall monitor the application of the procedures.

Any contravention of the procedures may be brought to the attention of the City Manager for further investigation and potential follow up disciplinary or legal action.

9. Review Date

Procedures Initial Review: 1 year, then with the policy after the 3rd year.
Subsequent Reviews: 5 years