

Purpose:

To describe the procedures and responsibilities for the display of the National, State, and Mourning Flags at all San Diego County fire agency facilities. The goal is to ensure consistent flag display and proper respect and etiquette for flags throughout the County of San Diego.

Policy:

This policy should be used to ensure proper flag etiquette is followed and flag use is conducted consistently throughout the San Diego fire agencies.

Definitions:

Incident-Related Line of Duty Death

- A fatality which is the result of an acute injury or illness that is directly attributable to only one emergency incident in which the deceased was providing service to another. The fatality will likely have occurred either at the scene or as the result of injury or illness requiring immediate hospitalization following the incident.

Non-Incident-Related Line of Duty Death

- A fatality that is the result of an injury or illness that occurs on-duty while not assigned to an incident or as the result of a documented work-related condition.

Non-Occupational Death

- Any fatality that does not meet either of the line of duty death criteria above.

Procedure:

National and State Flag Display

The United States and California flags shall normally be displayed:

- Every day, from 0800 hours to 1700 hours sharp.
- Every day, 24 hours per day if illuminated during hours of darkness.
- Flags will be displayed during all weather conditions, including rain. All-weather flags should be used during inclement weather per the U.S. Flag Code.
- The flag of the United States shall always be flown above all other flags.
- Personnel hoisting or lowering flags shall always do so in full uniform.

- All displaying flags must be in good condition and replaced when faded, torn or tattered.
- The facility Company Officer is responsible for the proper display and respectful care of flags during display and when not in use. The flag shall be properly folded as described in the attachment and stored appropriately.

Lowering U.S. Flag to Half-Staff

To comply with United States flag code proper flag etiquette, fire agencies shall ensure that the President of the United States or the Governor of California officially orders the lowering of the U.S. flag prior to lowering to half-staff, unless otherwise directed by individual jurisdictional policy.

National Holidays:

- Out of respect and honor for those who have given their lives for the United States and as directed per the U.S. Flag Code, the U.S. Flag will be flown at half-staff on the following holidays.
 - Memorial Day: last Monday in May (0800-1200 hours only)
 - Peace Officer's Memorial Day: May 15
 - Patriot Day: September 11
 - National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service: (Early October)
 - Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day: December 7

Half-Staff Flag Display

Direction to place the flag at half-staff and return to full-staff will be given by Department Administration.

- The flag, when flown at half-staff, should be first hoisted briskly to the peak and then lowered slowly to the half-staff position. The flag should be again raised to the peak before it is lowered for the day.
- When displaying the U.S. Flag at half-staff, no other flags should be presented on the same staff.
- The U.S. Flag will be flown at half-staff by proclamation of the U.S. President, Governor, City Mayor or directed by jurisdiction policy.

Flag Etiquette

- Personnel raising and lowering flags should be in full uniform.

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- The flag shall be hoisted briskly, to the peak, lowered slowly, and not allowed to touch the ground.
 - No flag shall be placed or flown above the flag of the United States of America.
 - When flags are displayed on multiple flag poles, the U.S. Flag shall always be presented to its own right.
 - A flag may be cleaned, but not repaired. It shall be replaced when faded or torn.
 - To dispose of a flag, including those received from the public, follow agency specific guidance to ensure flags are destroyed in a dignified manner following proper protocols.

Apparatus Display

- Nylon all-weather U.S. Flags, no larger than 2' by 3', may be displayed on Type 1 and 3 Engines and Truck Companies.
 - Flags must not be mounted in a manner or location which interferes with the safe operation of apparatus, including, but not limited to operator/crew visibility, and/or visibility or proper function of operating/warning devices.
 - Flags should be mounted in a manner and location which permits prompt removal.
 - Flags should be removed from apparatus operating in wildland fire situations due to the possibility of ignition. Removal of flags should not significantly delay response or deployment.
 - Apparatus flags in disrespectful condition (dirty, faded, torn, or tattered) should not be displayed. In the absence of a respectful flag, no flag should be displayed until an acceptable replacement is obtained.

Firefighter Mourning Flag

The San Diego County Fire Agencies have adopted a standard Mourning Flag that is to be displayed at Fire Station facilities when appropriate.

- Flown from a pole that is affixed in a bracket on the side of the building at a 45-degree angle.
- Located in an area visible to the public.

The Mourning Flag will be stored in an area known and readily accessible to on duty fire personnel.



The Company Officer is responsible for the proper display of the Mourning Flag and its respectful care when not in use. Replacement of the Mourning Flag due to wear and tear shall be requested by the Company Officer as needed.

Mourning Flag Display

- The Fire Chief or designee will order mourning flags to be flown whenever it is appropriate according to the following guidelines. The affected agency's Fire Chief will provide guidance on any variations to the guidelines based on specific circumstances. Badge shrouds should be worn per individual Department guidelines whenever the mourning flags are displayed.
- Mourning Flags will be displayed at all fire stations from the time of notification until sunset on the day of the funeral or memorial service when:
 - A Firefighter from a Fire Department within California suffers an incident related line of duty death (LODD).
 - A Firefighter from Fire Department outside of California suffers an incident related line of duty death (LODD) while assigned to an incident within California.
 - An active duty Firefighter or uniformed non-suppression member of a Fire Department from within San Diego County dies from a non-incident related line of duty death (LODD).
 - A Firefighter line of duty death occurs that is of significant magnitude at the national level as determined by the Fire Chief or designee.
- Mourning Flags will be displayed at all fire stations on the day of the funeral or memorial service (0800 to sunset) when:
 - An active duty Firefighter or uniformed non-suppression member of a Fire Department from within San Diego County dies from a non-occupational cause.
 - A retired Firefighter from an agency within San Diego County dies within five years of separation as a direct result of a documented work-related cause.
- The Fire Chief has discretion to order actions outside of this protocol under special circumstances.

The Mourning Flag may be displayed when the U.S. and State flags are at half-staff.

NOTE: The U.S. Flag will be lowered to half-staff upon authorization from the US President or the Governor of California for the duration of the order. It also may be lowered to half-staff in accordance to local jurisdiction guidance.

References

- U.S. Flag Code (4 U.S.C. Chapter 1)
- U.S. Patriotic and National Observances (36 U.S.C. Chapter 1)
- Flag folding procedure

Attachment 1

Flag Folding Procedure

To properly fold the American flag, follow these directions:

1. To begin, with one person at either ^{Type} end, hold the flag waist high so that's its surface is parallel to the ground.



2. Fold the lower half of the stripe section lengthwise over the field of stars, holding the bottom and top edges securely.



3. Fold the flag again lengthwise, now with the blue field on the outside.



4. Make a triangular fold by bringing the striped corner of the folded edge to meet the open (top) edge of the flag. (It is easier if the person folding the flag takes one step forward before starting to fold the flag.)



5. Turn the outer (end) point inward, parallel to the open edge, to form a second triangle.



6. Continue the triangular folding until the entire length of the flag is folded in this manner.



7. When the flag is completely folded, only a triangular blue field of stars should be visible. If a hem protrudes beyond the blue field, it should be neatly tucked inside the folds of the flag so that it does not show. The folded flag is then presented to the next of kin.

