

How to retire an old, worn, frayed and/or faded U.S. Flags in a dignified way

The preferred and most dignified way to retire old, worn, frayed and/or faded U.S. Flags is by burning them. The process and tradition of properly retiring an American flag requires finding an unserviceable flag repository location in your area. The retirement of an unserviceable American flag is a time-honored tradition and one that carries great significance. Taking your flag to one of these flag disposal locations will ensure that the traditions and ceremony are utilized in the flag's retirement.

As a revered symbol of the United States of America, the flag demands the highest level of respect; and as such should be disposed of in a respectable manner. Provided below are steps to properly retire your own American flag if you are unable to locate a facility near you. These steps are in accordance with the United States Flag Code (4 USC Sec 8 Para (k), Amended July 7, 1976).

1. Build a medium-sized fire in a safe, approved location. The fire will need to have reached a proper size and level of heat so it will fully burn the flag without leaving any remnants of the flag intact.
2. If the flag is currently flying, respectfully lower the flag and remove it from the pole. Fold the flag in the traditional triangle fold. (See instructions below)
3. Place the folded flag on top of the fire, being careful to not injure yourself. Watch the flag to make sure it is fully incinerated
4. While the flag is in the process of being burned, observe the flag with respect and reverence.
5. While the flag is being incinerated, recite the Pledge of Allegiance.
6. Once the process of burning the flag is complete and no part of the flag remains, safely put the fire out completely.

* Only one flag need be used in the ceremony, which is representative of all the flags to be burned in the service. The remainder of the flags collected should be incinerated.

Unserviceable Flag Repositories in Greene County:

Greene County Veterans Service Agency- 159 Jefferson Heights, Suite D303, Catskill NY 12414

Phone Number 518-943-3703 – Repository located inside office

Greene County Sheriff's Department- 370 Mansion St, West Coxsackie, NY 12192

Phone Number 518-943-3300 – Please call ahead

Athens American Legion Post 187- 94 Second Street Athens NY 12015 – Outside of the legion there is a drop box. Unserviceable Flag Retirement Ceremony held 3rd Sunday in November Follow TGM American Legion Post 187 on Facebook for current events

Cairo masonic Lodge- 523 Main Street Cairo NY 12413 – Boy Scouts dispose of the flags.

Catskill- Catskill Elks Lodge post 1341 45N Jefferson Ave, Catskill NY 12414

Phone Number 518-943-2067 – in the front corridor when you walk in the first door.

Coxsackie- Coxsackie Town Hall 56 Bailey Street Coxsackie NY 12051 518-731-2727 – inside town hall building ask someone at the front and they will help you out.

Durham Valley- East Durham post office 2355 NY-145, East Durham, NY 12423

Greenville – American Legion Post 291 54 Maple Ave Greenville NY 12083 - outside drop box
Unserviceable Flag Ceremony held 2nd Sunday in June Follow Greenville American Legion Post 291 on Facebook for current events

Medway-Grapeville Fire Company – County Route 51, Hannacroix, NY 12087

Phone Number: (518) 731-8525

Unserviceable Flag Ceremony TBD follow Medway-Grapeville Fire Co. on Facebook for current events
Please contact Medway-Grapeville Fire Chief by e-mail: chief@medwayfire.org to arrange drop-off of unserviceable flags

Tannersville- Tannersville American Legion Post 165 – Tannersville Fire Department 21 Park Lane

Tannersville, New York, 12485

Phone number: 518-589-6095

Windham- Windham VFW Post 1545 – 5565 NY-23 Windham NY 12496

e-mail: vfwpost1545@gmail.com

Greene County USPS Post Offices accepting unserviceable flags:

Greenville

Haines Falls

Hensonville

Maplecrest

Westkill

Windham

Flag Retirement is the term used to define the proper, dignified way of

Destroying United States flags that are no longer fit to serve the nation.

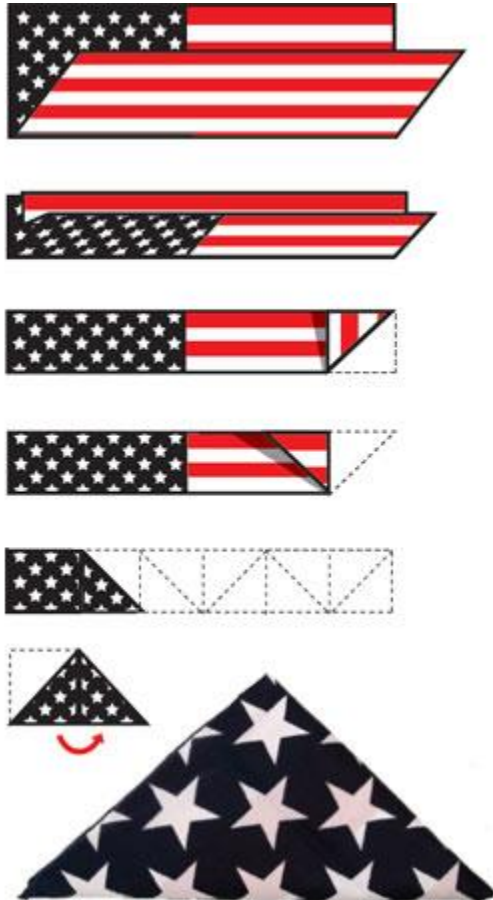
Some etiquette for displaying your American Flag:

- Fly your flag from sunrise to sunset. If you want to fly it 24-hours, make sure it is properly lit up in the darkness.
- When you fly your flag at half-staff, you should first raise it to full staff and lower it half way down the pole
- On special flag holidays, the American flag should fly at half-staff. On Memorial Day, it should fly at half-staff until noon and then be raised to full height
- The flag should always fly above every other flag when displayed on a single pole or lanyard.

•If you're displaying several flags in a row, the U.S. flag always goes to the observer's left. Other world flags can be flown at the same height but state and local flags should always fly lower

When storing or retiring a US Flag:

Fold the flag in the traditional triangle, as follows, never crumple it up:



The U.S. Flag code (4 USC Sec 8 Para (k)) states that, "the flag, when it is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display, should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning." Thus, when a flag is torn and tattered beyond repair, it's time for it to be retired.

The Veterans Department of Affairs suggests starting by folding the flag in a customary triangle manner. Then prepare a large enough fire space to sufficiently burn the flag completely. Next place the flag in the fire and while it burns, individuals at the ceremony should salute or recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Finally, end the ceremony with a moment of silence and bury the ashes once the flag is completely consumed.

Many groups that hold annual or semi-annual flag retirement ceremonies often have their own unique traditions they also follow. But these are the minimum steps everyone should at least follow when they retire an American Flag.

Never:

- Dip the American flag to any person, vessel, or flag
- Let the flag touch the ground
- Fly the flag upside down, unless in case of serious emergency
- Carry anything in the flag
- Use the flag as clothing
- Store the flag in a place where it can get dirty
- Draw on it, or otherwise mark it in any other manner

10 Interesting US Flag Facts:

- 1)** There are 50 stars and 13 stripes on the American flag. The 50 stars represent each of the 50 states in the U.S. and the 13 stripes represent the original 13 colonies that became the first states in the Union.
- 2)** History states that red, white and blue were chosen as the colors to represent valor (red), liberty and purity (white), and justice and loyalty (blue).
- 3)** There have been 27 official versions of the American flag, each with a different amount of stars.
- 4)** When Alaska and Hawaii become states 49 and 50, President Eisenhower received thousands of ideas for an updated flag. Robert G. Heft, a 17-year old high school student from Ohio, submitted his version that he created for a class project, and it was accepted and remains in use today. Can you believe that Robert got a B- on his project?
- 5)** Betsy Ross was a seamstress who made clothes for George Washington. In June, 1776, Washington approached her to make the first American flag, and the rest is, well, history.
- 6)** Francis Scott Key wrote the lyrics to our national anthem after he witnessed the British attack at Fort McHenry. He watched the British 'rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air, yet still saw 'that star-spangled banner yet wave o'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.'
- 7)** What's left of the 15-star, 15-bar flag that immortalized the national anthem is on permanent display at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History.

8) After a tragedy like September 11th, 2001, or a death like Abraham Lincoln, the flag is flown at half staff for 30 days as a representation of the whole nation being in a state of mourning. It's called 'half staff' on land, and 'half mast' on a ship.

9) Of the six American flags that are planted on the moon, five of them are still standing. Which one is not? The first one, planted by Neil Armstrong during the Apollo 11 mission.

10) According to the [U.S. Flag Code website](#), when the American flag is flown at night it must be illuminated; it should never be flown in bad weather; it can only be flown upside down to signal distress; it must be raised quickly and lowered slowly; and no other flag can be placed above it. The flag should be flown during school days in or near every school building. It's a myth that the flag must be burned if it touches the ground. The flag must be burned if it's damaged and is no longer suitable for flying.