

MUNICIPAL FLAG POLICY

Effective:	December 1, 2009	Revision Date:	July 20, 2022
Authority:	Council	Supersedes:	

1. Policy Statement

This policy outlines and defines the criteria and process for raising, displaying, and half-masting of flags at corporate properties and facilities of The Corporation of the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville (hereinafter referred to as the Town).

2. Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to provide clear guidelines and process for raising, displaying, and half-masting of flags at corporate properties and facilities of the Town.

3. Scope

This policy shall apply to Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville community groups and members.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Leisure & Community Services will maintain an inventory of all flags flown at Town Hall and its corporate properties. Leisure & Community Services will be responsible for request intake for raising of community or alternate flags.

5. Procedures**DIGNITY OF THE CANADIAN FLAG**

The National Flag of Canada shall be displayed only in a manner befitting this important national symbol; it should not be subjected to indignity or displayed in a position inferior to any other flag or ensign. The National Flag always takes precedence over all other national flags when flown in Canada. The only flags to which precedence is given over the Canadian flag are the personal standards of members of the Royal Family and of Her Majesty's fourteen representatives in Canada (i.e. The Governor General, 10 Lieutenant Governors and 3 Territorial Commissioners).

The National Flag of Canada should always be flown on its own mast - flag protocol dictating that it is improper to fly two or more flags on the same mast (e.g., one beneath the other).¹ Rules for flying the flag as provided by the Ministry of Canadian Heritage may be obtained from the Ministry of Canadian Heritage website www.pch.gc.ca.

When three flags are displayed, the National Flag should be at the centre. To an observer facing the display and main entrance of the building, the second-ranking flag (in order of [precedence](#)) is placed to the left of centre, and the other to the right.

A common combination of flags is that of the National Flag of Canada with a provincial flag and a municipal flag. In such a case, the National Flag should be in the centre with the Ontario provincial flag to the left and the Town's municipal flag to the right (to an observer facing the display).

HALF-MASTING

1. Flags are flown at the half-mast position as a sign of respect and condolence or to commemorate significant dates:
2. The appropriate staff at each location will be required to lower and raise the flags **during regular business hours on the day(s) of each event**;
3. All flags will be flown at half-mast at the corporate properties in accordance with the guiding principles of the Canadian National Flag Protocol, through the following specific occasions:
 - On the death of a current or former Mayor or a Member of Council;
 - On the death of a current and former Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville employee. (In the case of retired Town employees, the flag is flown at half-mast only if the death is reported to the Town prior to the funeral);
 - On the death of the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, the Premier of Ontario or another person similarly honoured by the Province of Ontario;
 - On the death of the local Member of Parliament or local Member of Provincial Parliament whose riding includes the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville;
4. The flags at Fire stations may also be flown at half-mast in recognition of the death of active or retired Town fire fighters; in recognition of line-of-duty deaths of emergency service workers in other municipalities; and in special circumstances outside of Ontario at the discretion of the Fire Chief. The half-masting of such flags shall be performed by the Fire station staff;
5. A special honour for someone the Town wishes to respect. This may include a

foreign Head of State or Head of Government or other notable person. In these instances, the CAO will determine whether the Town will follow the lead of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

6. In accordance with Canadian and Ontario protocol, flags will be flown at half-mast on the death of the Sovereign or a member of the Royal Family related in the first degree to the Sovereign (spouse, son or daughter, father, mother, brother or sister), the Governor General, the Prime Minister, a former governor general, a former prime minister, or a federal cabinet minister;
7. For the purposes of this policy, Members of Council and staff are requested to notify the Clerk's Department upon the death of any of the above-noted persons.
8. The Clerk's office via Corporate Communications, Members of Council, staff and all facilities will be informed of the half-masting of flags, with respect to the location, the reason, and the duration that the flag will be flown at half-mast. The appropriate staff at each location will be required to lower and raise the flags in accordance with the Clerk's notification. This notice will also be published on the Town's website for information to the public.
9. Flags will be flown at half-mast, in recognition of the following dates:
 - ***April 9, Vimy Ridge Day;***
 - April 28, Workers' Mourning Day;
 - ***Last Sunday in September, Police and Peace Officers' National Memorial Day, until sunset;***
 - ***June 23, National Day of Remembrance for Victims of Terrorism;***
 - November 11, Remembrance Day (the National flag is to be flown at half-mast from 11:00 a.m. to coincide with the start of the ceremony at the Cenotaph at the Stouffville Cemetery, until sunset; and
 - December 6, National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.
10. Flags may be flown at half-mast in respect of an individual not specifically identified in this section, at the discretion of the Mayor and Clerk.
11. In exceptional circumstances, and on the advice of the Clerk, the Mayor may approve the half-masting of the flags at Town facilities, which is not provided for in this policy.

With respect to these guidelines, the following should also be noted:

On occasions requiring that one flag be flown at half-mast, all flags flown together are flown half-mast. Some buildings fly flags from horizontal or angled poles, without halyards, to which flags are permanently attached. Flags on these will not be half-masted.

THE PROPER DISPOSAL OF FLAGS

When a flag becomes tattered or faded and is no longer in a suitable condition for use, it should be destroyed in a dignified way, for example by burning it privately, or by tearing or cutting it into strips that no longer resemble the original flag.

PROCESS FOR RAISING AND/OR DISPLAYING OF COMMUNITY OR ALTERNATE FLAGS

The term “flag” applies to national, provincial, Town and community and/or alternate flags. Examples of community or alternate flags include but are not limited to the following: United Way of York Region, Canadian Red Cross, Olympic Torch Relay, Community Living, Franco-Ontario, D-Day Ceremony, Scouts Canada, Rainbow Flag for Pride Week, and flags of foreign nations recognized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Approvals for flag raisings will be subject to the principles of the Human Rights Code Amendment Act, 2006.

To ensure that the Town is flying flags that are appropriately aligned with the municipality and its core values, flag raising requests will not be issued for the following:

- a) Political parties or political organizations;
- b) Religious organizations or in celebration of religious events;
- c) Promotion of business or commercial enterprise;
- d) Matters inciting hatred, or those that are discriminatory;
- e) Intent is contrary to corporate policies or by-laws; or
- f) Intent is to defame the integrity of the Town, Ontario or Canada.

The CAO or designate may seek input from the Diversity & Inclusion Working Group, or other Working Groups as required.

Procedure:

1. Any organization or community group that meets the criteria may complete a flag raising request form to request a flag raising on the Town’s Community Flagpole. The form will be available on the Town’s website and is directed to the Leisure and Community Services department.
2. The CAO may identify a flag to be flown in recognition of a celebration, event, or Town’s value, that would not normally be identified by a community group. For example, the CAO may identify a sports flag (Stouffville Junior Hockey Team, Toronto Raptors,

Toronto Maple Leafs etc.) to be flown to celebrate a milestone event such as a championship win.

3. The flag raising request form will seek the following:
 - a) Organization name, contact information, website URL (if available)
 - b) Purpose of flag raising (cause or event that is being recognized)
 - c) Preferred date/time for the flag raising ceremony
 - d) Indication if it is a one-time request or annual
 - e) Image of the flag
 - f) Names/titles of individuals who will attend the flag raising event, including names of individuals who will speak at the event.
 - g) Details about educational/ceremonial material that will be available at the flag flying event.
 - h) Applications should be submitted a minimum of one month in advance of the first date that the flag is being requested to fly.
 - i) Requestor must supply flag within specific dimensions identified by Leisure and Community Services at least one week in advance of the flag raising.
 - j) Duration of flag display will be governed by availability and scheduling.
 - k) The Leisure and Community Services department will notify the applicant if their flag raising request has been approved or denied and will be circulated to internal stakeholders.

Communications:

Any event or communication requirements will be the sole responsibility of the requestor.

6. Notes

REFERENCES

- ¹ Canadian Heritage (www.pch.gc.ca) - *Rules for Flying the Flag*