

Flag Protocol

Legislative Services
Policy B18

Policy:	B18 – Flag Protocol
Policy Department(s):	Legislative Services
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Policy Purpose

To establish the process for ensuring proper protocol for Canadian, Provincial, County, and other flags is followed by the County of Grande Prairie and to ensure that all flags at municipal facilities/properties are flown and displayed in a consistent and appropriate manner.

Policy Statement

That National Flag of Canada and the flags of the provinces, territories and cities are symbols of honor and pride for all Canadians. The manner in which flags may be displayed in Canada is not governed by legislation but is established practice. This policy sets guidelines for the County of Grande Prairie to ensure that the flags displayed are treated with respect and follow customs and etiquette recommended by the federal government.

Definitions

“CAO” also known as “County Manager” or “Chief Administrative Officer” means the person, or delegate appointed by Council to the position of Chief Administrative Officer under the Municipal Government Act for the County.

“County” means the municipality of the County of Grande Prairie No.1 having jurisdiction under the Municipal Government Act and other applicable legislation.

“Half-Mast” means the position of the flag when flying at half-mast will depend on its size, the length of the mast and its location; but, as a general rule, the centre of the Flag should be halfway down the mast. When hoisted to or lowered from half-mast position, a flag should be first raised to the masthead.

“National Flag” means the National Flag of Canada as approved by Parliament and proclaimed by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Canada, on February 15, 1965.

“Provincial Flag” means the Flag of Alberta as officially adopted on June 1, 1968, with the proclamation of the Flag Act.

“Tier 1 Level” means the County Administration and Community Services buildings and fire halls.

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“Tier 2 Level” means County campgrounds with year-round park hosts.

“Tier 3 Level” means cemeteries managed by the County.

Policy Guidelines

Displaying Flags

1. Flags shall be in excellent condition (no holes, tears, or frayed edges) and a fringe on a flag is not permitted.
2. Tier 1 Level facilities shall have 3 flag poles that shall fly the National Flag, the Provincial Flag, and the County Flag and must follow the Half-Mast protocol as outlined in this Policy.
3. Tier 2 Level facilities shall have 3 flag poles flying the National Flag, the Provincial Flag, and the County Flag and will not follow the Half-Mast protocol as outlined in this Policy.
4. Tier 3 Level facilities shall have 2 flag poles flying the National Flag and the Provincial Flag and will not follow the Half-Mast protocol as outlined in this Policy.
5. The County of Grande Prairie flag takes precedence over all community and/or ethnic flags.
6. Flags should always be shown, represented, or used in a dignified manner. They should not be used as a table or seat cover, to mask boxes or other items or to cover a statue, monument, or plaque for an unveiling ceremony. When used on the occasion of unveiling a monument, table, picture, etc. the flag should be properly draped and prevented from falling to the ground or floor.
7. The National Flag, Provincial Flag and County Flag shall fly day and night.
8. The National Flag takes precedence over all other flags when flown in Canada. No other flag shall be flown at a higher height than the National Flag and when flown with other flags, it should be raised first and lowered last unless all are being raised and lowered simultaneously.
9. When 2 or more nation's flags are flown, use separate staffs of the same height. In procession, carry the National Flag on the marching right.
10. When several other flags are carried abreast, carry the National Flag in front of the centre of the line.
11. When suspended vertically in the middle of the street, the upper part of the flag should face north in an east-west street and face east in a north-south street.
12. When sharing the same base in an arrangement of 3 flags, the National Flag shall be placed left of centre, or highest point. In a 2 base arrangement, the National Flag shall be placed left of centre.

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13. There are 3 flags displayed on the north end of the Council Chamber, to the left of the portrait of the King (from left to right) Alberta, Canada, and the County.
14. When used to cover a casket at funerals, the canton should be draped over the upper left corner of the casket. The flag should be removed before the casket is lowered. The flag should be 4.5 feet x 9 feet (1.4m x 2.8m).
15. Municipal, Provincial, Canadian, and special occasion flags are flown or displayed at many municipally-owned buildings. Care should be taken when a group of flags are flown or displayed together that the proper etiquette is followed.
16. The County may require any third party that manages or leases County-owned facilities or lands, including but not limited to lease holders, facility operators, and contracted service providers, to comply with this Policy and to coordinate with the County for any flag-related activities, such as raising, lowering, or changing flags, to ensure adherence to established protocols. Where applicable, the County shall include a clause within the relevant agreement or lease requiring the third party to observe all provisions of this Policy, including the proper display, maintenance, and handling of flags on County property.
17. Any person or organization who purchases a County Flag should follow the proper protocol and etiquette as outlined in this Policy, when displaying and disposing of the flag. Persons or organizations purchasing County Flags are not required to follow the Half-Masting dates outlined in this Policy.

Flags Flown at Half-Mast for Mourning

18. To Half-Mast the flag as a sign of mourning, the flag is brought to the Half-Mast position by first raising it to the top of the mast and then immediately lowering it slowly to the Half-Mast position.
19. The Canadian Flag, Provincial Flag and County Flag in front of Tier 1 Level facilities shall be lowered to Half-Mast from the time of notification of death until after the funeral. The flags shall be raised to full-mast 1800 hours on the day of the funeral.
20. On the occasion of death of:
 - 20.1. The Sovereign and the Sovereign's family;
 - 20.2. The Governor General (past and present);
 - 20.3. The Prime Minister (past and present);
 - 20.4. Chief Justice of Canada and Members of the Canadian Ministry (current);
 - 20.5. Lieutenant Governors (current);
 - 20.6. Privy Councillors or Senators (current);
 - 20.7. Members of the House of Commons (current);

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- 20.8. The Premier of Alberta (past or present);
 - 20.9. A Member of the Legislative Assembly or a Member of Parliament representing the County of Grande Prairie No.1;
 - 20.10. The Reeve or Member of Council (past or present);
 - 20.11. A County employee (current);
 - 20.12. A County volunteer firefighter (current);
 - 20.13. An RCMP Officer serving within the County; or
 - 20.14. Volunteer when death occurs in the line of duty in serving the County the flags shall be flown at Half-Mast.
21. The Reeve or CAO shall have at their discretion the authority to lower the flags to Half-Mast for other circumstances of such nature or magnitude that would deem it appropriate in which this Policy does not address.
 22. The Government of Canada - Canadian Heritage provides direction as to occasions when the National Flag is to be flown at Half-Mast.
 23. It is the responsibility of General Managers and Directors to notify the CAO and Legislative Services of a death of a County employee (current), a County volunteer firefighter (current), or a volunteer when death occurs in the line of duty in serving the County.

Flags Flown at Half-Mast for Mourning - Special Circumstances

24. The flags will be flown at Half-Mast for a period of 3 days commencing on the day of notification and being raised to full mast at 1800 hours on the third day under special circumstances such as:
 - 24.1. When the memorial service is delayed due to family members having to travel long distances to attend the memorial service or the illness of a surviving spouse.
 - 24.2. When the repatriation of the deceased is required.
 - 24.3. Under any other special circumstances as recognized by the Reeve or CAO.

Dates When Flags are Flown at Half-Mast

25. April 28, Day of Mourning for Persons Killed or Injured in the Workplace (Workers' Mourning Day), sunrise to sunset.
26. June 23 National Day of Remembrance for Victims of Terrorism.
27. Second Sunday in September, Firefighters' National Memorial Day.

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28. Last Sunday in September, Police and Peace Officers' National Memorial Day, sunrise to sunset, unless Half-Masting occurs near the place where a memorial is being observed, then Half-Masting can occur according to the prescriber order of service, until sunset.
29. September 30, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.
30. November 11, Remembrance Day, unless Half-Masting occurs at the National War Memorial or a place where remembrance is being observed, then Half-Masting can occur at 11:00 a.m. or according to the prescribed order of service, until sunset.
31. December 6, National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, sunrise to sunset.
32. To commemorate the death of a member of the Canadian Forces (Albertan). In a show of respect for members of Canadian Forces born or stationed in Alberta, on the day(s) of the funeral(s).
33. When the date of Half-Masting falls on a weekend or statutory holiday, the flags may be lowered to Half-Mast on the last business day prior to the holiday/weekend and raised on the first business day following the holiday/weekend.

Special Occasion Flags

34. The County of Grande Prairie may fly special occasion flags to celebrate a particular date or event of significance to the County. Council shall decide which flags shall be flown for special occasions by motion.
35. The County may fly flags of community groups, charitable or non-profit organizations upon approval by Council by motion.
36. These flags are flown below the County flag.
37. Ethnic or community groups or organizations shall request in writing to Legislative Services for authorization to fly a flag at the Administration Building and specify a date and time they are requesting to:

County of Grande Prairie
10001 - 84 Avenue, Clairmont, AB T8X 5B2
legislativeservices@countygp.ab.ca
Phone: 780-532-9722 Fax: 780-539-9880

38. If the request meets the guidelines of the this Policy and is approved by Council by motion, Legislative Services shall proceed with the implementation of the flag raising.
39. Legislative Services shall contact the requesting group to confirm timelines for flag delivery, time, date, and other support required.

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Disposal of Flags

40. Flags shall be inspected and changed as required.. 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 by burning it privately.

Etiquette Procedures

41. Flags on the 3 flagpoles at the County facilities (Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 Levels) shall be raised and lowered by designated County staff.
42. Flags flown for special occasions, groups, or events shall be flown on the flagpole reserved for the County flag. At no time shall the National, Provincial or County Flag be replaced by a special occasion flag.
43. Legislative Services shall act as a resource on the subject of flag etiquette.
44. Legislative Services consults with the Government of Canada - Canadian Heritage and Government of Alberta Protocol Office in situations requiring flags and protocol.
45. Legislative Services shall confer with the CAO in situations where further discussion or decisions shall be made regarding displaying or raising flags.

Attachments

N/A

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References

Legal Authorities	Government of Canada Canadian Heritage Government of Alberta Protocol Office
Related Plans, Bylaws, Policies, Etc.	Policy B1 – Policy Development Procedure B18 – Flag Protocol
Other	National Flag Protocol: https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/flag-canada-etiquette/flying-rules.html

Revision History

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June 22, 2026	Reviewed and Amended CM20260622.008
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