



The Corporation of the Town of Essex

Policy Manual

Section:	Corporate
Subject:	Flag and Half-Masting Protocol Policy
Policy No.:	
Approval Date:	
Approved By:	
Prepared By:	Doug Sweet, Director, Community Services/Deputy CAO

1. Purpose

- i. This policy establishes a uniform and harmonized protocol and procedure for the raising, displaying, half-masting, replacing, and disposing of all flags at all properties and facilities owned and operated by the Town of Essex and at events conducted by the Town at other locations;
- ii. This policy further provides the authorization of requests for community organizations and special event flag raisings at all properties and facilities owned and operated by the Town of Essex; and
- iii. This policy ensures flags are flown, displayed, replaced and disposed of in accordance with the etiquette and manner outlined by the Ontario Department of Canadian Heritage.

2. Policy Statement

The Corporation of the Town of Essex recognizes that flags are important symbols that increase public awareness of special events, activities and historical commemorations,



and as such is committed to displaying flags on Town sites in a consistent and appropriate manner within an established protocol.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to all buildings, properties and facilities owned by the Town of Essex, as well as the locations of all Town operated events, except those that take place where the policies of another government body would take precedence.
- 3.2 This policy shall be reviewed every five (5) years from the date it becomes effective, and/or sooner at the discretion of the Chief Administrative Officer or designate.

4. Definitions

- 4.1. "**Cenotaph**" refers to a monument erected to honour the courage, valour and sacrifice of the heroes who have served - and continue to serve - Canada during times of war and conflict.
- 4.2. "**Flag Holder**" - or "**outrigger**" is a flagpole mounted on a building at an angle other than vertical.
- 4.3. "**Flag Pole**", "**Flagstaff**", and/or "**Staff**" refers to a cylindrical piece of metal or wood to which a flag is attached or from which it is hoisted.
- 4.4. "**Half-masting**" refers to the action of flying flags at a position that is equal distance from the top and bottom of a flagpole to mark periods of mourning or to commemorate solemn occasions.
- 4.5. "**Halyard**" refers to the rope used for raising or lowering a flag.
- 4.6. "**Masthead**" refers to the highest part of the flagpole.
- 4.7. "**National Flag of Canada**" means the flag approved by the Parliament of Canada as a national symbol of Canada.
- 4.8. "**Period of Mourning**" is defined as the day of passing until the day of the funeral.
- 4.9. "**Proclamation**" means a public or official announcement or declaration by the



Town

4.10. "**Provincial Flag of Canada**" means the flag approved by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as a provincial symbol of Canada.



5. Interpretations

Any reference in this policy to any statute or any section of a statute shall, unless expressly stated, be deemed to be reference to the statute as amended, restated or re-enacted from time to time. Any references to a by-law or Town policy shall be deemed to be a reference to the most recent passed policy or by-law and any replacements thereto.

6. Guiding Principles

The National Flag of Canada as well as other flags are symbols of honor and pride, and as such must be treated with respect.

6.1. Flag Etiquette

- 6.1.1. Flags of nations, provinces and cities should always be flown on their own mast or pole. It is improper to fly two or more flags on the same mast or pole (for example, one should not be beneath the other).
- 6.1.2. Nothing should be pinned to, drawn or sewn onto a nation, province or town flag.
- 6.1.3. Flags should not be obstructed or touch anything beneath them (i.e. floor, ground, table).

6.2. General Guidelines

- 6.2.1. Flag raising requests must be in connection with a particular event by an organization and requested on an annual basis.
- 6.2.2. A flag shall be flown for a period of up to one week, or for the duration of the associated event, whichever is less.
- 6.2.3. Flags shall only be raised and lowered on those business days that the Town office is open.
- 6.2.4. If the event is on a weekend, flags will be lowered at the end of the last business



day before the event, and raised again at the beginning of the next business day after the event.



6.3. Flag Locations at Town Sites

Town Hall	Town Hall Cenotaph
Spitfire Memorial Cenotaph	Train Station
Downtown Essex Centre	Essex Fire Station 1
Essex Fire Station 2	Harrow OPP Detachment
Harrow Library	Veteran Memorial Park
Peace Garden	Colchester Harbour

6.4. Position of Honour

Facing the building, the observer will see the flags positioned in the order noted below and always from left to right:

- a. Two Pole Display:
 - i. National Flag of Canada (left)
 - ii. Town of Essex Flag (right)
- b. Three Pole Display:
 - i. Province of Ontario Flag
 - ii. National Flag of Canada
 - iii. Town of Essex Flag
- c. Four Pole Display
 - i. Province of Ontario Flag
 - ii. National Flag of Canada
 - iii. Town of Essex Flag
 - iv. Other Flag



6.5. Flag Raising Criteria

6.5.1. Requests

Requests to fly a flag will be considered if the reason for flying the flag meets one of the following criteria:

- a. Support of particular event by a non-profit or charitable organization;
- b. Celebration achievements;
- c. Celebration of multi-cultural and civic events;
- d. Public awareness campaigns.

6.5.2. Restrictions to Requests

Approval will not be given to fly flags for the purpose of supporting or promoting the following:

- a. Political parties or political organizations;
- b. Religious organizations or religious events or celebrations; and
- c. Celebrations, campaigns or events intended for profit-making purposes.
- d. Events that support discrimination, hatred, violence or prejudice.

6.5.3. Request Submissions Process

Any Requests must be received for approval no less than 6 weeks prior to the date of event by way of submission directly to the Director of Community Services or through the Town's online Request service. Applicants will be notified within 1 week of submission should their application be accepted. All Requests must be completed annually and receive annual approval. Requests to fly will be for no longer than a 1 week in duration for the flying of any one applicant. Approved submissions will be required to pick up and drop off their event flag within 1 week of event date.



6.6. Town of Essex Cenotaphs and Remembrance Day

- 6.6.1. The National Flag of Canada flown at all three Town of Essex Cenotaphs will be half-masted as part of the Remembrance Day ceremony to honour and remember the fallen soldiers who gave their lives during the war.
- 6.6.2. This is the only time the flag at these location will be half-masted.
- 6.6.3. Flags at other locations (noted in Appendix A) will also be half-masted in honour of Remembrance Day. Flags will be lowered at the end of the last business day before Remembrance Day, and raised again at the beginning of the first business day afterwards.

6.7. Half-Mast for Mourning

- 6.7.1. Flags will be flown at half-mast positions, where feasible to do so, as a sign of mourning upon the passing of the following persons:
- Her Majesty the Queen and members of the Royal family;
 - A past or present Prime Minister;
 - A past or present day elected representative of the Federal, Provincial and Municipal Governments;
 - Present day employees of the Town of Essex;
 - A resident of Essex, who is a member of the Canadian Armed Forces, killed while deployed on operations; or
 - As directed by the Mayor and Town Council or the Chief Administrative Officer
- 6.7.2. To honor the deceased, all flags in a group shall be flown at half-mast from the time of passing until the end of the day of the funeral service.
- Only flags secured to flagpoles with halyards and pulleys will be half-masted.
 - To place a flag at half-mast, it shall be raised to the masthead, then, slowly lowered until the flag's center is midway between the masthead and the base of the flag pole.



6.7.3. Requests for half-masting

- All requests will be considered by the CAO (or designate) providing it meets the established criteria in the Flag Protocol Policy.

See Appendix A – Flag Locations for Half-Masting

6.7.4. Provincial Annual Half-Masting Days

Ontario annually half-masts the National Flag of Canada from sunrise to sunset on:

- April 28 - National Day of Mourning for Persons Killed or Injured in the Workplace
- November 11 – Remembrance Day

6.7.5. Flag Care and Maintenance

Flags will be inspected on a regular basis by the Department of Community Service.

When a flag's condition is such that it is no longer fitting for display (frayed, faded, torn, soiled or ripped), it is to be retired and replaced. The retired flag must be destroyed in a dignified manner.

7. Responsibilities

7.1. Council has the authority and responsibility to:

- a. Adopt and maintain the Flag Raising and Half-Masting Protocol Policy,
- b. Approve public awareness campaigns such as proclamations that involve the raising of a community flag, and
- c. Approve the addition of other provincially recognized days of mourning when flags would be flown at half-mast.

7.2. The Director, Community Service/Deputy CAO has the authority and responsibility to:

- a. Direct compliance with this policy.

- b. Give authorization to the Manager, Parks and Facilities areas to facilitate the raising/lowering of flags.

7.3. The Manager, Parks and Facilities has the authority and responsibility to:

- a. Ensure that protocols under this policy are communicated to staff and are carried out consistently.

8. Process of Half-Masting Flags for Mourning

Flags are flown at the half-mast position as a sign of mourning.

The flag is brought to the half-mast position by first raising it to the top of the mast then immediately lowering it slowly to the half-mast position.

The position of the flag when flying at half-mast will depend on the size of the flag and the length of the flagstaff. It must be lowered at least to a position recognizably "half-mast" to avoid the appearance of a flag which has accidentally fallen away from the top of the mast owing to a loose flag rope. A satisfactory position for half-masting is to place the centre of the flag exactly half-way down the staff (Figure 1).

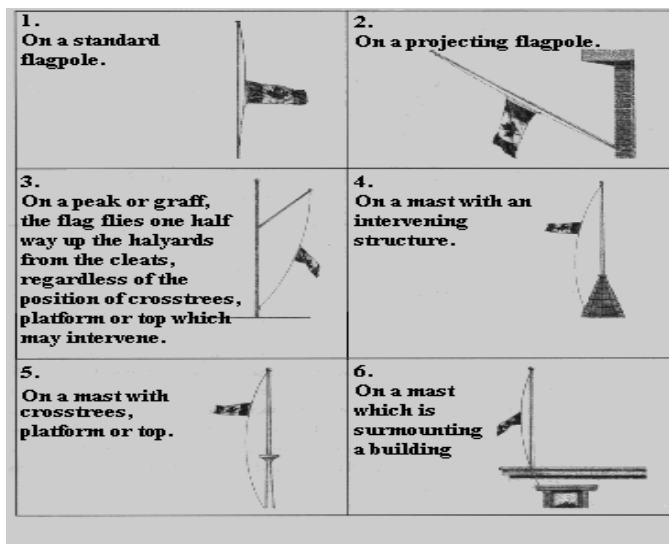


Figure 1

9. Community Flag Requests

Community Flag requests will be considered to celebrate an achievement; or to



recognize a charitable or non-profit organization to help raise public awareness of their programs or activities; or an organization that has achieved national or international distinction or made a significant contribution to the community; or an organization that has helped to enhance the Town of Essex in a positive manner. Community flags to be flown by special request will take the place of the Municipal Flag.

- The organization's flag will fly in connection with a particular event by such organization;
- No flags of commercial, religious or political organizations shall be permitted;
- No flags of a group or organization whose undertakings or philosophy are contrary to Town of Essex policies or by-laws, or espouse hatred, violence, discrimination, prejudice, or racism shall be permitted;
- An organization's flag shall be flown no more than once per calendar year;
- A flag shall be flown for a period of up to one week, or for the duration of the associated event, whichever is less;
- Organizations shall be required to submit requests for their organization's flag to fly on an annual basis, a minimum of four weeks prior to the requested date, and shall be in the form appended to this Policy;
- Requests for use of the community flag pole will be considered on a first come first served basis;
- Flags shall only be raised and lowered on those business days and hours that Town Hall is open.

10. Reference and Related Documents

- National Flag of Canada Act
- Federal Department of Canadian Heritage
- Rules for Flying the National Flag of Canada
- Ontario International Relations and Protocol



- History of the National Flag of Canada

11. Appendix A – Flag Locations for Half-Masting

	Location	Display	Flags	Half-Masting for Mourning & Remembrance Day
1	Town Hall	3 poles	National Flag of Canada, Provincial Flag of Canada & Town of Essex Flag	Yes – All Flags
2	Town Hall Cenotaph	4 poles	National Flag of Canada, Union Jack, Town of Essex, & National Flag of Canada	Yes – All Flags
3	Spitfire Memorial Cenotaph	3 poles	National Flag of Canada, Royal Canadian Air Force & British Air Command	Yes – All Flags
4	Train Station	2 poles	National Flag of Canada & Town of Essex Flag	Yes – All Flags
5	Downtown Essex Centre	2 poles	National Flag of Canada & Town of Essex Flag	Yes – All Flags
6	Essex Fire Station 1	3 poles	National Flag of Canada, Provincial Flag of Canada & Town of Essex Flag	Yes – All Flags
7	Essex Fire Station 3		National Flag of Canada	Yes
8	Harrow OPP Detachment	2 poles	National Flag of Canada & Town of Essex Flag	Yes – All Flags
9	Harrow Library	Projected from Building	National Flag of Canada	No
10	Veteran Memorial Park	4 poles	National Flag of Canada, Union Jack, Provincial Flag of Canada & Legion flag	Yes – All Flags

	Location	Display	Flags	Half-Masting for Mourning & Remembrance Day
11	Peace Garden	4 poles	National Flag of Canada, Provincial Flag of Canada, United States of America & Anishinabek First Nation	Yes – All Flags
12	Colchester Harbour	1 pole with yardarm	National Flag of Canada, Provincial Flag of Canada, & Town of Essex Flag	Yes – All Flags

12. Flags Display at Municipal locations

National Flag of Canada 

Province of Ontario 

Town of Essex 

Royal Union (Union Jack) 

Royal Canadian Air Force 

British Air Command 

United States of America 

Anishinabek First Nation 