



## Flag Code of India

There is universal affection and respect for, and loyalty to, the national flag. Yet, a perceptible lack of awareness is often noticed, not only amongst people but also in the organisations / agencies of the government, with regard to laws, practices and conventions that apply to the display of the national flag. Apart from non-statutory instructions issued by the Government from time to time, the display of the national flag is governed by the provisions of the *Emblems and Names (Prevention of Improper Use) Act*, 1950 and the *Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act*, 1971. The **Flag Code of India, 2002**, is an attempt to bring together all such laws, conventions, practices and instructions for the guidance and benefit of all concerned.

For the sake of convenience, the Flag Code of India, 2002, has been divided into three parts. Part I of the code contains a general description of the national flag. Part II of the code is devoted to the display of the national flag by members of public, private organisations, educational institutions, etc. Part III of the code relates to display of the national flag by Central and state governments and their organisations and agencies.

The Flag Code of India, 2002, took effect from January 26, 2002 and superseded the “Flag Code-India” as it existed earlier.

### **PART I—GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE NATIONAL FLAG**

1.1 The national flag shall be a tri-colour panel made up of three rectangular

panels or sub-panels of equal widths. The colour of the top panel shall be India saffron (*kesari*) and that of the bottom panel shall be India green. The middle panel shall be white, bearing at its centre the design of *Ashoka Chakra* in navy blue colour with 24 equally spaced spokes. The *Ashoka Chakra* shall preferably be screen printed or otherwise printed or stenciled or suitably embroidered and shall be completely visible on both sides of the flag in the centre of the white panel.

1.2 The national flag of India shall be made of hand spun and hand woven wool/cotton/silk *khadi* bunting.

1.3 The national flag shall be rectangular in shape. The ratio of the length to the height (width) of the flag shall be 3:2.

1.4 The standard sizes of the national flag shall be as follows:

Flag Size No.	Dimensions in mm
1	6300 × 4200
2	3600 × 2400
3	2700 × 1800
4	1800 × 1200
5	1350 × 900
6	900 × 600
7	450 × 300
8	225 × 150
9	150 × 100

1.5 An appropriate size should be chosen for display. The flags of 450 × 300 mm size are intended for aircrafts on VVIP flights, 225 × 150 mm size for motor-cars and 150 × 100 mm size for tables.

## **PART II—HOISTING/DISPLAY/USE OF NATIONAL FLAG BY MEMBERS OF PUBLIC, PRIVATE ORGANISATIONS, EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, ETC.**

### **Section I**

2.1 There shall be no restriction on the display of the national flag by members of general public, private organisations, educational institutions,

etc., except to the extent provided in the *Emblems and Names (Prevention of Improper Use) Act*, 1950 and the *Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act*, 1971 and any other law enacted on the subject. Keeping in view the provisions of the aforementioned Acts

- (i) The flag shall not be used for commercial purposes in violation of the *Emblems and Names (Prevention of Improper Use) Act*, 1950
- (ii) The flag shall not be dipped in salute to any person or thing
- (iii) The flag shall not be flown at half-mast except on occasions on which the flag is flown at half-mast on public buildings in accordance with the instructions issued by the Government
- (iv) The flag shall not be used as a drapery in any form whatsoever, including private funerals
- (v) The flag shall not be used as a portion of costume or uniform of any description nor shall it be embroidered or printed upon cushions, handkerchiefs, napkins or any dress material
- (vi) Lettering of any kind shall not be put upon the flag
- (vii) The flag shall not be used as a receptacle for receiving, delivering, holding or carrying anything:  
Except that there shall be no objection to keeping flower petals inside the flag before it is unfurled as part of celebrations on special occasions and on national days like the Republic Day and the Independence Day;
- (viii) When used on occasions like unveiling of a statue, the flag shall be displayed distinctly and separately and it shall not be used as a covering for the statue or monument
- (ix) The flag shall not be used to cover a speaker's desk nor shall it be draped over a speaker's platform
- (x) The flag shall not be intentionally allowed to touch the ground or the floor or trail in water
- (xi) The flag shall not be draped over the hood, top, sides or back of a vehicle, train, boat or an aircraft
- (xii) The flag shall not be used as a covering for a building
- (xiii) The flag shall not be intentionally displayed with its saffron portion downwards

2.2 A member of public, a private organisation or an educational institution may hoist/display the national flag on all days and occasions, ceremonial

or otherwise. Consistent with the dignity and honour of the national flag

- (i) Whenever the national flag is displayed, it should occupy the position of honour and should be distinctly placed
- (ii) A damaged or dishevelled flag should not be displayed
- (iii) The flag should not be flown from a single masthead simultaneously with any other flag or flags
- (iv) The flag should not be flown on any vehicle except in accordance with the provisions contained in Section IX of Part III of this code
- (v) When the flag is displayed on a speaker's platform, it should be flown on the speaker's right as he faces the audience or flat against the wall, above and behind the speaker
- (vi) When the flag is displayed flat and horizontal on a wall, the saffron band should be upper most and when displayed vertically, the saffron band shall be on the right with reference to the flag (i.e., left to the person facing the flag)
- (vii) To the extent possible, the flag should conform to the specifications prescribed in Part I of this code
- (viii) No other flag or bunting should be placed higher than or above or side by side with the national flag; nor should any object including flowers or garlands or emblem be placed on or above the flag-mast from which the flag is flown
- (ix) The flag should not be used as a festoon, rosette or bunting or in any other manner for decoration
- (x) The flag made of paper may be waved by public on occasions of important national, cultural and sports events. However, such paper flags should not be discarded or thrown on the ground after the event. As far as possible, they should be disposed of in private consistent with the dignity of the flag
- (xi) Where the flag is displayed in open, it should, as far as possible, be flown from sunrise to sunset, irrespective of weather conditions
- (xii) The flag should not be displayed or fastened in any manner as may damage it
- (xiii) When the flag is in a damaged or soiled condition, it shall be destroyed as a whole in private, preferably by burning or by any other method consistent with the dignity of the flag.

## Section II

2.3 The national flag may be hoisted in educational institutions (schools, colleges, sports camps, scout camps, etc.) to inspire respect for the flag. A model set of instructions for guidance is given here.

- (i) The school will assemble in open square formation with pupils forming the three sides and the flag-staff at the centre of the fourth side. The headmaster, the pupil leader and the person unfurling the flag (if other than the headmaster) will stand three paces behind the flag-staff.
- (ii) The pupils will fall according to classes and in squads of ten (or other number according to strength). These squads will be arranged one behind the other. The pupil leader of the class will stand to the right of the first row of his class and the form master will stand three paces behind the last row of his class, towards the middle. The classes will be arranged along the square in the order of seniority with the senior most class at the right end.
- (iii) The distance between each row should be at least one pace (30 inches) and the space between form and form should be the same.
- (iv) When each form or class is ready, the class leader will step forward and salute the selected school pupil leader. As soon as all the forms are ready, the school pupil leader will step up to the headmaster and salute him. The headmaster will return the salute. Then, the flag will be unfurled. The school pupil leader may assist.
- (v) The school pupil leader in charge of the parade (or assembly) will call the parade to attention, just before the unfurling, and he will call them to the salute when the flag flies out. The parade will keep at the salute for a brief interval, and then on the command “order”, the parade will come to the attention position.
- (vi) The flag salutation will be followed by the national anthem. The parade will be kept at the attention during this part of the function.
- (vii) On all occasions when the pledge is taken, the pledge will follow the national anthem. When taking the pledge the assembly will stand to attention and the headmaster will administer the pledge ceremoniously and the assembly will repeat it after him.
- (viii) In pledging allegiance to the national flag, the practice to be

adopted in schools is as follows:  
Standing with folded hands, all repeat together the following pledge:  
“I pledge allegiance to the National Flag and to the Sovereign Socialist  
Secular Democratic Republic for which it stands.”

## **PART III—HOISTING/DISPLAY OF THE NATIONAL FLAG BY THE CENTRAL AND STATE GOVERNMENTS AND THEIR ORGANISATIONS AND AGENCIES**

### **Section I: Defence Installations/Heads of Missions/Posts**

- 3.1 The provisions of this part shall not apply to defence installations that have their own rule for display of the national flag.
- 3.2 The national flag may also be flown on the headquarters and the residences of the heads of missions/posts abroad in the countries where it is customary for diplomatic and consular representatives to fly their national flags on the headquarters and their official residences.

### **Section II: Official Display**

- 3.3 Subject to the provisions contained in Section I above, it shall be mandatory for all governments and their organisations/agencies to follow the provisions contained in this part.
- 3.4 On all occasions for official display, only the flag conforming to specifications laid down by the Bureau of Indian Standards and bearing their standard mark shall be used. On other occasions also, it is desirable that only such flags as of appropriate size are flown.

### **Section III: Correct Display**

- 3.5 Wherever the flag is flown, it should occupy the position of honour and be distinctly placed.
- 3.6 Where the practice is to fly the flag on any public building, it shall be flown on that building on all days including Sundays and holidays and, except as provided in this code, it shall be flown from sun-rise to sun-set

irrespective of weather conditions. The flag may be flown on such a building at night also but this should be only on very special occasions.

- 3.7 The flag shall always be hoisted briskly and lowered slowly and ceremoniously. When the hoisting and the lowering of the flag is accompanied by appropriate bugle calls, the hoisting and lowering should be simultaneous with the bugle calls.
- 3.8 When the flag is displayed from a staff projecting horizontally or at an angle from a windowsill, balcony, or front of a building, the saffron band shall be at the farther end of the staff.
- 3.9 When the flag is displayed flat and horizontal on a wall, the saffron band shall be upper most and when displayed vertically, the saffron band shall be to the right with reference to the flag, i.e., it may be to the left of a person facing it.
- 3.10 When the flag is displayed on a speaker's platform, it shall be flown on a staff on the speaker's right as he faces the audience or flat against the wall above and behind the speaker.
- 3.11 When used on occasions like the unveiling of a statue, the flag shall be displayed distinctly and separately.
- 3.12 When the flag is displayed alone on a motor car, it shall be flown from a staff, which should be affixed firmly either on the middle front of the bonnet or to the front right side of the car.
- 3.13 When the flag is carried in a procession or a parade, it shall be either on the marching right, i.e., the flag's own right, or if there is a line of other flags, in front of the centre of the line.

## **Section IV: Incorrect Display**

- 3.14 A damaged or disheveled flag shall not be displayed.
- 3.15 The flag shall not be dipped in salute to any person or thing.
- 3.16 No other flag or bunting shall be placed higher than or above or, except as hereinafter provided, side by side with the national flag; nor shall any object including flowers or garlands or emblem be placed on or above the flag-mast from which the flag is flown.
- 3.17 The flag shall not be used as a festoon, rosette or bunting or in any other manner for decoration.
- 3.18 The flag shall not be used to cover a speaker's desk nor shall it be

draped over a speaker's platform.

3.19 The flag shall not be displayed with the saffron portion downwards.

3.20 The flag shall not be allowed to touch the ground or the floor or trail in water.

3.21 The flag shall not be displayed or fastened in any manner as may damage it.

## **Section V: Misuse**

3.22 The flag shall not be used as a drapery in any form whatsoever except in State/military/Central para-military forces funerals hereinafter provided.

3.23 The flag shall not be draped over the hood, top, sides or back of a vehicle, train or boat.

3.24 The flag shall not be used or stored in such a manner as may damage or soil it.

3.25 When the flag is in a damaged or soiled condition, it shall not be cast aside or disrespectfully disposed of but shall be destroyed as a whole in private, preferably by burning or by any other method consistent with the dignity of the flag.

3.26 The flag shall not be used as a covering for a building.

3.27 The flag shall not be used as a portion of a costume or uniform of any description. It shall not be embroidered or printed upon cushions, handkerchiefs, napkins or boxes.

3.28 Lettering of any kind shall not be put upon the flag.

3.29 The flag shall not be used in any form of advertisement nor shall an advertising sign be fastened to the pole from which the flag is flown.

3.30 The flag shall not be used as a receptacle for receiving, delivering, holding or carrying anything:

Provided that there shall be no objection to keeping flower petals inside the Flag before it is unfurled, as part of celebrations on special occasions and on National Days like the Republic Day and the Independence Day.

## **Section VI: Salute**

3.31 During the ceremony of hoisting or lowering the flag or when the flag is passing in a parade or in a review, all persons present should face the flag

and stand at attention. Those present in uniform should render the appropriate salute. When the flag is in a moving column, persons present will stand at attention or salute as the flag passes them. A dignitary may take the salute without a head dress.

## **Section VII : Display with Flags of other Nations and of United Nations**

- 3.32 When displayed in a straight line with flags of other countries, the national flag shall be on the extreme right, i.e., if an observer were to stand in the center of the row of the flags facing the audience, the national flag should be to his extreme right.
- 3.33 Flags of foreign countries shall proceed as from the national flag in alphabetical order on the basis of English versions of the names of the countries concerned. It would be permissible in such a case to begin and also to end the row of flags with the national flag and also to include the national flag in the normal country-wise alphabetical order. The national flag shall be hoisted first and lowered last.
- 3.34 In case flags are to be flown in an open circle, i.e., in an arc or a semi-circle, the same procedure shall be adopted as is indicated in the preceding clause of this section. In case flags are to be flown in a closed, i.e., complete circle, the national flag shall mark the beginning of the circle and the flags of other countries should proceed in a clockwise manner until the last flag is placed next to the national flag. It is not necessary to use separate national flags to mark the beginning and the end of the circle of flags. The national flag shall also be included in its alphabetical order in such a closed circle.
- 3.35 When the national flag is displayed against a wall with another flag from crossed staffs, the national flag shall be on the right, i.e., the flag's own right, and its staff shall be in front of the staff of the other flag.
- 3.36 When the United Nation's flag is flown along with the national flag, it can be displayed on either side of the national flag. The general practice is to fly the national flag on the extreme right with reference to the direction which it is facing (i.e., extreme left of an observer facing the masts flying the flags).

- 3.37 When the national flag is flown with flags of other countries, the flag masts shall be of equal size. International usage forbids the display of the flag of one nation above that of another nation in time of peace.
- 3.38 The national flag shall not be flown from a single mast-head simultaneously with any other flag or flags. There shall be separate mast-heads for different flags.

## **Section VIII: Display over Public Buildings/Official Residences**

- 3.39 Normally the national flag should be flown only on important public buildings such as high courts, secretariats, commissioners' offices, collectorates, jails and offices of the district boards, municipalities and *zilla parishads* and departmental/public sector undertakings.
- 3.40 In frontier areas, the national flag may be flown on the border customs posts, check posts, out posts and at other special places where flying of the flag has special significance. In addition, it may be flown on the camp sites of border patrols.
- 3.41 The national flag should be flown on the official residences of the President, Vice-President, governors and lieutenant governors when they are at headquarters and on the building in which they stay during their visits to places outside the headquarters. The flag flown on the official residence should, however, be brought down as soon as the dignitary leaves the headquarters and it should be re-hoisted on that building as he enters the main gate of the building on return to the headquarters. When the dignitary is on a visit to a place outside the headquarters, the flag should be hoisted on the building in which he stays as he enters the main gate of that building and it should be brought down as soon as he leaves that place. However, the flag should be flown from sun-rise to sun-set on such official residences, irrespective of whether the dignitary is at headquarters or not on the Republic Day, Independence Day, Mahatama Gandhi's Birthday, National Week (6th to 13th April, in the memory of martyrs of Jalianwala Bagh), any other particular day of national rejoicing as may be specified by the Government of India or, in the case of a state, on the anniversary of formation of that state.

- 3.42 When the President, the Vice-President or the Prime Minister visits an institution, the national flag may be flown by the institution as a mark of respect.
- 3.43 On the occasions of the visit to India by foreign dignitaries, namely, President, Vice-President, Emperor/King or Heir Prince and the Prime Minister, the national flag may be flown along with the flag of the foreign country concerned in accordance with the rules contained in Section VII by such private institutions as are according reception to the visiting foreign dignitaries and on such public buildings as the foreign dignitaries intend to visit on the day of visit to the institution.

## **Section IX: Display on Motor Cars**

- 3.44 The privilege of flying the national flag on motor cars is limited to the
- (1) President
  - (2) Vice-President
  - (3) Governors and Lieutenant Governors
  - (4) Heads of Indian missions/posts abroad in the countries to which they are accredited
  - (5) Prime Minister and other Cabinet Ministers
    - Ministers of State and Deputy Ministers of the Union
    - Chief Minister and other Cabinet Ministers of a State or Union Territory
    - Ministers of State and Deputy Ministers of a State or Union Territory
  - (6) Speaker of the Lok Sabha
    - Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha
    - Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha
    - Chairmen of Legislative Councils in States
    - Speakers of Legislative Assemblies in States and Union Territories
    - Deputy Chairmen of Legislative Councils in States
    - Deputy Speakers of Legislative Assemblies in States and Union Territories
  - (7) Chief Justice of India
    - Judges of Supreme Court
    - Chief Justice of High Courts

### Judges of High Courts

- 3.45 The dignitaries mentioned in Clauses (5) to (7) of Paragraph 3.44 may fly the national flag on their cars, whenever they consider it necessary or advisable.
- 3.46 When a foreign dignitary travels in a car provided by government, the national flag will be flown on the right side of the car and the flag of the foreign country will be flown on the left side of the car.

## **Section X: Display on Trains/Aircrafts**

- 3.47 When the President travels by special train within the country, the national flag should be flown from the driver's cab on the side facing the platform of the station from where the train departs. The flag should be flown only when the special train is stationary or when coming into the station where it is going to halt.
- 3.48 The national flag will be flown on the aircraft carrying the President, the Vice-President or the Prime Minister on a visit to a foreign country. Alongside the national flag, the flag of the country visited should also be flown but, when the aircraft lands in countries *enroute*, the national flags of the countries touched would be flown instead, as a gesture of courtesy and goodwill.
- 3.49 When the President goes on tour within India, the national flag will be displayed on the side by which the President will embark the aircraft or disembark from it.

## **Section XI: Half-masting**

- 3.50 In the event of the death of the following dignitaries, the national flag shall be half-masted at the places indicated against each on the day of the death of the dignitary.

<b><u>Dignitary</u></b>	<b><u>Place or Places</u></b>
President	Throughout India
Vice-President	
Prime Minister	
Speaker of the Lok Sabha	Delhi
Chief Justice of India	
Union Cabinet Minister	Delhi and State Capitals
Minister of State or Deputy Minister of the Union	Delhi
Governor	Throughout the State or Union Territory concerned
Lt. Governor	
Chief Minister of a State	
Chief Minister of a Union territory	
Cabinet Minister in a State	Capital of the State concerned

- 3.51 If the intimation of the death of any dignitary is received in the afternoon, the flag shall be half-masted on the following day also at the place or places indicated above, provided the funeral has not taken place before sun-rise on that day.
- 3.52 On the day of the funeral of a dignitary mentioned above, the flag shall be half-masted at the place where the funeral takes place.
- 3.53 If State mourning is to be observed on the death of any dignitary, the flag shall be half-masted throughout the period of the mourning throughout India in the case of the Union dignitaries and throughout the state or union territory concerned in the case of a state or union territory dignitary.
- 3.54 Half-masting of the flag and, where necessary, observance of state mourning on the death of foreign dignitaries will be governed by special instructions which will issue from the ministry of Home Affairs in individual cases.
- 3.55 Notwithstanding the above provisions, in the event of a half-mast day coinciding with the Republic Day, Independence Day, Mahatma Gandhi's Birthday, National Week (6th to 13th April, in the memory of martyrs of Jalianwala Bagh), any other particular day of national rejoicing as may be specified by the Government of India or, in the case of a state, on the

anniversary of formation of that state, the flags shall not be flown at half-mast except over the building where the body of the deceased is lying until such time it has been removed and that flag shall be raised to the full-mast position after the body has been removed.

3.56 If mourning were to be observed in a parade or procession where a flag is carried, two streamers of black crepe shall be attached to the spear head, allowing the streamers to fall naturally. The use of black crepe in such a manner shall be only by an order of the Government.

3.57 When flown at half-mast, the flag shall be hoisted to the peak for an instant, then lowered to the half-mast position, but before lowering the flag for the day, it shall be raised again to the peak.

**Note:** By half-mast is meant hauling down the flag to one half the distance between the top and the guy-line and in the absence of the guy-line, half of the staff.

3.58 On occasions of State/military/Central para-military forces' funerals, the flag shall be draped over the bier or coffin with the saffron towards the head of the bier or coffin. The flag shall not be lowered into the grave or burnt in the pyre.

3.59 In the event of death of either the Head of the State or Head of the Government of a foreign country, the Indian mission accredited to that country may fly the national flag at half-mast even if that event falls on Republic Day, Independence Day, Mahatma Gandhi's Birthday, National Week (6th to 13th April, in the memory of martyrs of Jalianwala Bagh) or any other particular day of national rejoicing as may be specified by the Government of India. In the event of death of any other dignitary of that country, the national flag should not be flown at half-mast by the missions except when the local practice or protocol (which should be ascertained from the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, where necessary) require that the national flag of a foreign mission in that country should also be flown at half-mast.