

Standard Elements of a Flag Ceremony

FLAG BEARER: The person who carries the flag - one flag per person. Hold the staff at a slight angle in front of the body or hold the folded flag in front of the body at waist level. The Flag Bearer stands silent and at attention throughout the ceremony and does not repeat the Pledge of Allegiance nor sings the National Anthem.

COLOR GUARD: They guard the honor of the flag and watch to see that the flag does not touch the ground. They stand behind the flag bearer, or to each side if in a line of more than one flag. Two per flag is traditional, but any number may be used. They stand silent and at attention throughout the ceremony and do not repeat the Pledge of Allegiance nor sing the National Anthem.

COLOR GUARD COMMANDER: The designated Scout who "calls out" the parts of the ceremony. Stands in front and to one side of audience.

Raising and Lowering the Flag on a Flag Pole - Raise the flag briskly, lower it slowly. When flying the flag at half mast, raise it to the top of the pole, then lower it to half mast. When taking the flag down from half mast, first raise it back to the top of the pole, then lower it slowly. On Memorial Day, fly the flag at half-mast until noon then raise it to full staff for the rest of the day.

Carrying the Flag - Always carry the flag aloft and flying free. When the flag is carried alone, there should be an honor guard to the left of it, or one on each side of it. When carried with other flags, the U.S. Flag should be in front of the others, or the right if the flags are in a line. Never dip the flag of the United States for any person or thing.

Commands for a Standard Flag Ceremony

Said by the Color Guard Commander:

1. "Please stand for the presentation (or retiring) of Colors."

Note: Said before flags enter the room or begin motion.

2. "Scouts, Attention."

Note: All Scouts stand at attention.

3. "Color Guard, Attention."

4. "Color Guard, Advance."

Note: Color Guard advances to stage or flag pole, U.S. Flag is first in line.

5. "Scouts, salute."

Note: The Color Guard stays at attention. Color Guard Commander and Scouts Salute.

Scouts salute the flag any time it is in motion.

6. "Color Guard, Halt."

7. "Will the audience please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance."

Note: Color Guard does not salute or recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Nor do they sing the National Anthem. They stand at attention and guard the flags.

8. "Two"

Note: After completion of the Pledge, Color Guard Commander gives the Command "Two." Upon this command, scouts lower their arm smartly to their side from the salute. Meaning-- A salute has 2 steps: the first step is the gesture, the second step is the release of the gesture.

9. "Color Guard, Post the Colors."

Note: Once the flags are posted into the flag stands, the color guard salutes the flag and then stands at attention. When retrieving the colors, the color guard first salute the flags before removing them from their posts.

10. "Color Guard, Retreat."

11. "Color Guard, Halt."

12. "Color Guard, Dismissed." (or "Scouts, Dismissed" if this is the closing)

Note: The Color Guard Commander may direct the Scouts to be at-ease or to be seated.

Color Guard Commander's Cheat Sheet

Presenting the Colors:

1. Please stand for the presentation of the colors.
2. Scouts, attention.
3. Color Guard, attention.
4. Color Guard, advance.
5. Scouts, salute.
6. Color Guard, halt.
7. Will the audience please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance.
8. Two
9. Color Guard, post the colors.
10. Color Guard, retreat.
11. Color Guard, halt.
12. Color Guard, dismissed.
13. Scouts, at ease.

Retiring the Colors:

1. Please stand for the retiring of the colors.
2. Scouts, attention.
3. Color Guard, attention.
4. Color Guard, advance.
5. Color Guard, halt.
6. Color Guard, retrieve the colors.
7. Scouts, salute.

8. Color Guard, retreat.
9. Color Guard, halt.
10. Color Guard, dismissed.
11. Scouts, at ease. (or dismissed)