

GUIDE TO FLYING FLAGS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The Department of the Premier and Cabinet's Protocol Unit provides information and advice on the protocols associated with the flying of flags, including the correct handling and display, the correct precedence (or order for flying flags) and when to fly flags at half-mast.

Flag Protocol

Key points to remember when flying Australian flags

A flag should always be:

- treated with the respect and dignity it deserves
- raised no earlier than first light and lowered no later than dusk
- raised briskly and lowered with dignity
- flown aloft and free, as close to the top of the flag mast as possible and with the rope tightly secured; and
- illuminated if flown at night.

A flag should never be:

- allowed to fall or lie upon the ground
- used to unveil monuments or plaques, cover tables/seats or used as a curtain
- flown when damaged, faded or in a dilapidated condition
- flown upside down, even as a signal of distress
- flown from the same flag pole as another flag

Flag Precedence

The Australian National Flag takes precedence over all flags when flown in Australia or an Australian territory. It should not be flown in an inferior position to any other flag with the exception of the United Nations Flag on United Nations Day. (The superior position is based on the formation of the flagpoles in a set, not the height of the flag on the flagpole.)

Where all flagpoles are the same height and positioned in a straight row, the Australian National Flag should always be positioned on the far left (meaning the left of a person facing the building).

The correct precedence or order for flying flags in the community is:

1. Australian National Flag
2. National flags of other nations
3. state and territory flags



4. Aboriginal Flag and Torres Strait Islander Flag, or other flags prescribed by the Flags Act 1953
5. ensigns and pennants (including local government, private organisations, sporting clubs and community groups).

Unless all flags on display can be raised and lowered simultaneously, the Australian National Flag should be raised first and lowered last. If there are two Australian National Flags, one can be flown at each end of a line of flags.

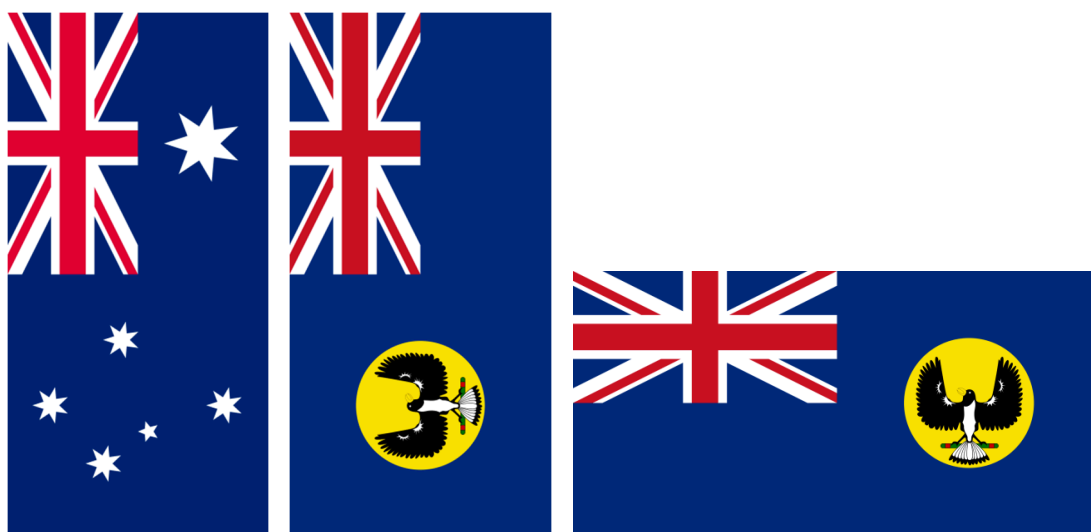
When flying the Australian National Flag alone at a building which has more than two flagpoles, the Australian National Flag should be flown in the centre, or as near as possible to it.

Horizontal and vertical display of flags

On the Australian National Flag and Australian State flags, the Union Jack is placed in the upper left-hand quarter (known as the 'canton') nearest the flagpole. The canton is the position of honour on the flag and it should always appear in the upper left-hand corner when the flag is being flown (either horizontally or vertically).



When the flag is displayed vertically, the canton appears to be back-to-front, however as the canton is in the upper left-hand quarter, it is correct.



Protocol for flying flags at half-mast

Flags are flown at half-mast as a sign of mourning. Flags in any locality can be flown at half-mast on the death of a local citizen or on the day, or part of the day of their funeral.

There are occasions when direction will be given by the Australian Government and/or Government of South Australia for all flags to be flown at half-mast.

To be notified about events such as half-mastings and other nationally significant occasions, please contact the Protocol Unit.

The following points outline the correct protocols associated with flying flags at half-mast:

- when flying the Australian National Flag with other flags, all flags should be flown at half-mast together
- the Australian National Flag should be raised first and lowered last
- the flag should be raised to the top of the flagpole briefly, and then lowered slowly and ceremoniously
- flags flown at half-mast should be positioned a third of the distance down the flagpole
- under no circumstances are flags to be flown at half-mast after dark, even if illuminated.

For more information regarding flag protocol visit the Australian Government website, [It's an Honour](#).

Last published Wednesday, 6 July 2016.

For more information:

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