

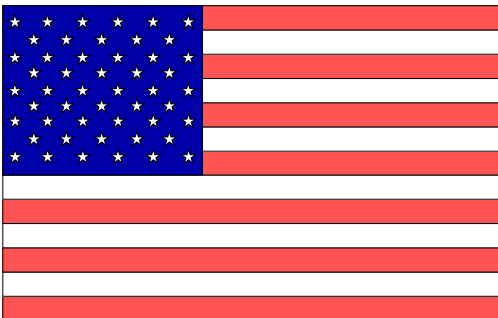
# Understanding & Honoring the American Flag at 4-H Meetings

## “Old Glory” – Our American Flag

One easily recognized symbol of the United States is our flag. Our flag represents a living country and is itself considered a living thing.

The American flag is most likely flown at your school, at important buildings in your community, and at private homes, and displayed at your 4-H club meetings. It is a widely used symbol, especially in recent weeks.

The American flag has thirteen stripes that represent the 13 original colonies of the United States of America and a field of blue with 50 stars in the upper left corner. Tradition has given the following meanings to the colors:  
**White** - purity and innocence  
**Red** - hardiness and valor  
**Blue** - vigilance, perseverance and justice.



The 50 stars are arranged in nine rows staggered horizontally and eleven rows staggered vertically. The stars represent the 50 states in the United States and are

located in the blue area of the flag, known as the “union.”

A flag flying over Fort McHenry, Baltimore, Maryland, after a battle during the War of 1812, provided the inspiration for Francis Scott Key to write the **Star Spangled Banner**, our national anthem.

## Flag Etiquette

Laws, known as the “Flag Code,” tell us how honor and display the American flag. Some that we should be most aware of include:

- When the flag is raised, lowered, or passes by you in a parade or review, you should stand at attention with your right hand over your heart. Males should remove hats or caps and hold them with their right hand over their hearts.
- The flag is normally displayed from sunrise to sunset on buildings or stationary flagstaffs. However, the flag

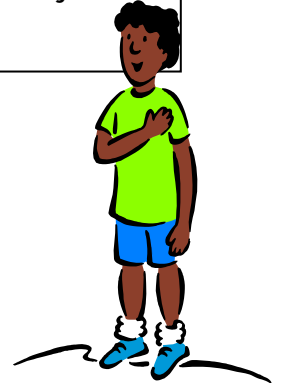
may be flown 24 hours a day if properly illuminated during the hours of darkness.

- The flag should always be raised briskly and lowered slowly.
- The flag should always hold the prominent position in an auditorium. It should be on the speaker's right, as he faces the audience, and forward towards the audience. Any other flag should be placed on the left of the speaker.
- Lapel flag pins should be worn on the left lapel near the heart.
- When displayed horizontally or vertically, the union should be at the top left.
- The flag of the United States should be at the highest point when flown with other flags or pennants.
- The flag should never be displayed with the union down, except as a signal of dire distress.
- The flag should never touch anything beneath it, such the ground, floor, or water.
- The American flag is meant to be a flag. It should never be used as clothing, bedding, draperies or as a covering for a ceiling. However, a flag patch may be attached to clothing.

and other service personnel have treated our flag with the highest esteem. One way we can meet the high standards set by these service men and honor our country is to meet the high standards set for our behavior towards the American flag.

### The American Pledge...

I pledge allegiance to the flag  
Of the United States of America  
And to the republic for which it  
stands one nation, under God,  
indivisible, for liberty and justice  
for all.



### Why should we bother with flag etiquette when it's exciting to fly the Stars and Stripes?

For more than 200 years, our country's military, firemen, police,