



Corporate Policy Manual

Policy Name: Flags and Proclamations Policy	Policy Number: CP-2023-03
Adopted: December 6, 2023	Division/Department: Corporate Services/Clerks
Authority: Resolution Number 2023-81	Supersedes: CP-2021-04 Flag Raising Policy
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1. Purpose

The Flags and Proclamations Policy (“Policy”) establishes a Town protocol for the flying of flags at all municipal buildings, properties, and facilities.

This policy also provides administrative guidelines for the following:

- a) Procedure for flag raisings to recognize a visiting dignitary.
- b) Procedure for half-masting based on the rules for half-masting the National Flag of Canada.
- c) Proclamations and community flag raisings on the Ceremonial Flagpole and commemorative lighting of municipal buildings for civic recognition, organizations, special events, or community groups, that are of significance to the Town of Midland.

2. Policy Statement

The Flags and Proclamations Policy confirms the Town’s commitment to adhering to proper etiquette for the flying of flags on Town property.

This Policy also confirms that the Town recognizes the importance of significant dates, occasions, and contributions of non-profit or charitable organizations, as well as supporting public awareness campaigns and encouraging community participation and civic pride, in a consistent manner.

Proclamations issued, commemorative lighting and community flags flown or lowered are not to be interpreted as a civic or personal endorsement by the Town.

3. Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy:

- a) “**Canadian Flag**” means the National Flag of Canada as approved by Parliament and proclaimed by Queen Elizabeth II on January 28, 1965.

- b) **“Ceremonial Flagpole”** means the flagpole located at the Municipal Office at 575 Dominion Avenue designated for flying the Town of Midland flag or Community Flags.
- c) **“Clerk”** means the Clerk of the Town of Midland.
- d) **“Community Flag”** means a flag of a recognized charity, event, or community group.
- e) **“Community Flag Raising”** means the raising of a flag for the purpose of recognizing an event or for raising awareness of the Ceremonial Flagpole.
- f) **“Council”** means the Council of the Town of Midland
- g) **“County of Simcoe Flag”** means the current Simcoe County Flag as approved by Simcoe County Council.
- h) **“Half-Mast”** means the action of flying all flags, forming a single display of 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.
- i) **“Lighting Request(s)”** means a request to illuminate the Midland Public Library or Municipal Office in a specific colour to commemorate an event, organization, or proclamation request.
- j) **“Ontario Flag”** means the current Provincial Flag as proclaimed by the *Flag Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. F.20.
- k) **“Proclamation(s)”** means a formal public statement by the Town designating a period (day, week, or month) in recognition of a significant individual, organization, cause, or event.
- l) **“Town”** means the Corporation of the Town of Midland.
- m) **“Town of Midland Flag”** means the current Town Flag as approved by Council.

4. Canadian Heritage - Flag Etiquette in Canada

- a) The Canadian Flag, when flown in Canada, always takes precedence over all other national flags. The only flags to which precedence is given over the Canadian Flag are the personal standards of members of the Royal Family and of His Majesty’s representatives in Canada.
- b) The Canadian Flag should be displayed only in a manner befitting this important national symbol. It should not be subjected to indignity or displayed in a position inferior to any other flag or ensign.
- c) The manner in which flags may be displayed in Canada is not governed by any legislation, but by established practice. This Policy adheres to the Government of Canada “Rules for flying the National Flag of Canada”. The etiquette outlined in the

federal guidelines is an adaptation of international usage and of customs the federal government has been observing for many years.

- d) Should governing legislation be introduced, Federal or Provincial legislation pertaining to Flag Etiquette in Canada and/or the Province of Ontario will take precedence over this Policy.

5. Authorized Flags

- a) The Town may display the following flags: Canadian Flag, Ontario Flag, County of Simcoe Flag, Town of Midland Flag, Community Flag, or any other flag approved by the Town.
- b) The Town may fly the Town of Midland Flag on Town premises on a permanent basis on the Ceremonial Flagpole and/or on a temporary basis to mark special occasions.

6. Flag Placement Etiquette

- a) The Canadian Flag should always be flown on its own mast. No flag should be flown or displayed above the Canadian Flag.
- b) Flags flown together should be approximately the same size and flown from separate staffs at the same height.
- c) The Canadian Flag should be given the place of honour when flown or displayed with other flags.
 - i. **Where there is only one flagpole at a Town facility**, the Canadian Flag shall be flown.
 - ii. **When two or more flags are flown together**, the Canadian Flag should be on the left as seen by spectators in front of the flags. If a number of countries are represented, the Canadian Flag may be flown at each end of the line of flags.
 - iii. **When three flags are flown together**, the Canadian Flag should occupy the central position, with the next ranking flag to the left and third ranking to the right, as seen by the spectators in front of the flags.
 - iv. **When there are flag poles of differing heights**, the flags with the highest priority shall be flown on the highest flag poles, and the remaining flags shall revert to flag priority on the shorter flag poles.
 - v. **Where more than one flag is flown and it is impossible to hoist or lower at the same time**, the Canadian Flag should be hoisted first and lowered last.
 - vi. **Two flags may be flown on the Ceremonial Flagpole**. In all circumstances the order of the flags shall reflect the hierarchy of the levels of government being represented.

d) Ceremonial Flagpole

- i. In all circumstances, flags reflecting proclamations or special events may be flown on the Ceremonial Flagpole in the lowest position under the Town of Midland Flag.
- ii. If two Community Flag Raisings occur within the same time frame, the Town of Midland Flag may be removed, and placement of the Community Flags is based on the order of flag raising requests received.
- iii. Only one flag shall be flown on the Ceremonial Flagpole to commemorate a flag lowering.

7. Flag Inventory

- a) The Clerk's Office shall be responsible for maintaining an adequate inventory of flags for use in all facilities and shall replace flags as required.
- b) All flags flown shall be in good condition. The Clerk should be advised of any soiled, frayed, faded or torn flags for immediate replacement.

8. Disposal of Flags

Based on the National Flag of Canada etiquette, when a flag becomes tattered and is no longer in a suitable condition for use:

- a) It should be destroyed in a dignified way by respectfully cutting or tearing the flag into pieces, with each element of the flag reduced to a single colour, so that the remaining pieces do not resemble a flag.
- b) Individual pieces should be disposed of and not be reused or fashioned into anything.

9. Lowering of Flags to Half -Mast

Flags are flown at the Half-Mast position as a sign of mourning. The Half-Masting of national flags is a well-established procedure, whereby countries bestow an honour and express a collective sense of sorrow. Given that such flags are recognized as paramount symbols of their nations, the act of Half-Masting is a dramatic visual statement that speaks to the sense of loss that is shared by all their citizens.

In all circumstances, the Mayor of the Town, or his/her designate, shall direct the lowering of the flags.

10. When a Flag can be Half-Masted

- a) Flags shall be flown at Half-mast in recognition of the death of prominent public figures in accordance with the Government of Canada rules for half-masting the National Flag of Canada or by the Town.

- b) Flags at the Town Hall and all associated municipal buildings shall be flown at half mast in the event of the death of:
 - i. the Sovereign.
 - ii. an immediate relative of the Sovereign.
 - iii. the current or former Governor General of Canada.
 - iv. the current or former Prime Minister of Canada.
 - v. the current or former Lieutenant Governor of Ontario.
 - vi. the current or former Premier of Ontario.
 - vii. a local MP or MPP.
 - viii. the current or former Mayor of the Town.
 - ix. a current or former Council member of the Town.
 - x. Employees of the Town.
 - xi. Midland Fire Services Full-Time and Volunteer Fire Fighters, or otherwise directed by the Mayor or their designate.

- c) Flags at the Town Hall and all associated municipal buildings shall be flown at Half-Mast, to commemorate the following special days in accordance with the protocol established or recognized by the Government of Canada rules for half-masting the National Flag of Canada and by the Town (included on Schedule "A"):
 - i. April 28 - the Day of Mourning for Persons Killed or Injured in the Workplace.
 - ii. September 30 – National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.
 - iii. November 8 – Indigenous Veterans Day.
 - iv. November 11 - Remembrance Day.
 - v. December 6 - National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.
 - vi. Any other day declared by the Federal Government, the Province of Ontario or the Council of the Town of Midland as a day of mourning.

- d) Flags at the Midland Fire Hall and Municipal Office will be flown at Half-Mast:
 - i. Upon being notified of the death of a firefighter in the line of duty in another municipality across Canada.
 - ii. When notified of the death of a police officer in the line of duty across Ontario.

- e) Flags will be flown at Half-Mast upon receiving notification of the death, up to and including the day of the funeral service, unless circumstances prohibit the lowering of the flag for that time-period, as determined by the Clerk in consultation with the Mayor and/or CAO.

11. Notification for Half-Masting

- a) All Departments and Members of Council are requested to notify the Clerk in writing upon the death of any of the individuals identified in the Policy.
- b) In the event of a death of an active employee, Human Resources shall be responsible for the notification.

- c) The Clerk's Office shall notify Municipal facilities and the Communications Department by e-mail when flags are to be flown at Half-Mast.
- d) Notification will include the reason for the Half-Masting of flags and when flags can be raised again.
- e) The Communications Department will notify Council, Staff, and the public by posting a News and Notices article on the Town's website.
- f) The outdoor Town Hall sign will identify flags being flown at Half-Mast.

12. Procedure for Half-Masting

- a) 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.
- b) 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.
- c) On occasions requiring that one flag be flown at Half-Mast, all flags flown together should also be flown at Half-Mast. Flags will only be Half-Masted on those flagpoles fitted with halyards and pulleys. Some buildings fly flags from horizontal or angled poles, without halyards, to which flags are permanently attached. Flags on these will not be Half-Masted.
- d) Staff at each municipal facility will be responsible for lowering flags to Half-Mast when instructed to do so. Operations staff will be responsible for lowering flags in parks and along the roadside if required/applicable.
- e) In the case of the death of a firefighter in the line of duty in another municipality across Canada or when notified of the death of a police officer in the line of duty across Ontario, Fire Services staff shall be responsible for lowering the flag at the Fire Hall to Half-Mast.

13. Annually Recurring Proclamations and Flag Raisings (Schedule "A")

At the discretion of the Mayor, and in consultation with the Clerk and CAO, the Town may establish flag raisings, flags to be flown at half-mast, or proclamations to occur annually:

- a) Schedule "A" to this Policy outlines recurring events to be reviewed annually.
- b) Proclamations may occur with or without ceremony or a flag event.
- c) Organizations on the annual list (Schedule "A") are required to submit a request as outlined in Section 14.0 of this Policy.

- d) Schedule “A” includes the celebration of national recognition days for Town of Midland essential workers.
- e) Dates and occurrences of events noted on Schedule “A” will be added to the Town’s Community Calendar.
- f) Recurring events listed on Schedule “A” will be listed on the News and Notices page of the Town’s website on the date of the event.

14. Community Requests for Proclamations, Flag Raisings and Lighting

Community requests for the Town to recognize significant days or months encourage support from the public which benefits and enriches the entire community. Request may include such events as awareness campaigns and fund-raising initiatives.

a) Criteria for Approval of Requests

Approval of requests for proclamations, flag-raising or building illumination shall be based on the following:

- i. in honour of national days important to the residents of Midland.
- ii. for non-profit or charitable organizations and public awareness campaigns.
- iii. to celebrate cultural and civic events important to the residents of the Midland.

b) Criteria for Denial of Requests

Requests will be denied for proclamations, flag-raising, or building illuminations that represent or support:

- i. Political parties or organizations or matters of political controversy.
- ii. Religious organizations or the celebration of religious beliefs or events.
- iii. National independence days or republic days of other nations.
- iv. Fund-raising drives which are political or religious in nature.
- v. Organizations or matters that espouse hatred, violence, racism, or disorder.
- vi. Groups, organizations, or events that promote beliefs contrary to any other Town policy or by-law.

c) Responsibility

The Clerk, in consultation with the Mayor, and/or CAO as required, is responsible for providing advice, as necessary, on the applicability of any of the above criteria to any application received for Proclamation, Community Flag Raising or Lighting Requests.

d) Application Process

- i. Proclamations, Lighting or Community Flag Raising requests shall be submitted no less than thirty (30) days prior to the requested date using the online application form on the Town's website.
- ii. The Clerk or designate will review the application to determine if it meets the criteria in accordance with the Policy.
- iii. Requests will not be accepted by third parties on behalf of organizations or individuals.
- iv. Multiple requests for a similar topic will be reviewed and granted on a first-come first-served basis.
- v. An organization may request one recognition event per year.
- vi. Organizations do not have exclusive rights to the day, week or month being recognized.
- vii. The Mayor and/or designate will make their best effort to attend flag raising ceremonies held at the Town Hall.
- viii. Upon approval, the organization will provide the flag to be flown to the Clerk or designate.
- ix. Flags will remain on display for no more than two (2) weeks as time permits, at which time the organization will be contacted to pick up their flag.
- x. The timing may be extended at the discretion of the Mayor. The two-week limitation does not apply to flags listed as Authorized Flags.

e) Notification and Public Communication

- i. The Clerk or designate will issue a letter advising if the Proclamation, Community Flag Raising or Lighting and Request has been approved or denied, in accordance with the Policy.
- ii. If the request is approved, the organization will also receive a signed proclamation from the Mayor on behalf of Council.
- iii. A copy of the proclamation will be provided to members of Council through the next Council Information Package for information.
- iv. The organization is responsible for notifying the media or advertising prior to or after the proclamation, lighting, or community flag raising has taken place.
- v. Organizations may submit a request to add their event to the Town's Community Calendar through the Town's website.
- vi. Approved Proclamations, Lighting and Community Flag Raisings will be posted on the News and Notices page of the Town's website subsequent to the event.

15. Discretionary Provisions of this Policy

The Mayor, in consultation with the Clerk and CAO, shall have complete discretionary authority related to the raising and/or lowering of flags on municipal property, proclamations, commemorative building lighting, and any other provision of this Policy. The Library CEO shall also be consulted on requests for lighting of the exterior of the Library building.

Appendix 'A'

Annually Recurring Proclamations or flag events

Proclamation	Day or Month
Crime Stoppers Month*	January
Black History Month*	February
National Pink Shirt Day (anti-bullying)	Last Wednesday of February
Simcoe County #ITSTARTS*	March
International Women's Day*	March 8
Transit Workers Appreciation Day	March 18
World Water Day	March 22
Earth Day	April 22
Day of Mourning for Persons Killed or Injured in the Workplace*	April 28
Public Works Week	May
National Day of Awareness for MMIWG2s (Red Dress Day)*	May 5
Indigenous History Month	June
Pride Month	June
Indigenous Peoples Day*	June 21
Fierte Simcoe Pride*	July
Emancipation Day	August 1
International Overdose Awareness Day*	August 31
National Childhood Cancer Awareness Month*	September
Terry Fox Run in the Heart of Georgian Bay*	September
Firefighters National Memorial Day	Second Sunday of September
National Day for Truth and Reconciliation* (orange shirt day)	September 30
Indigenous Veterans Day*	November 8
Remembrance Day*	November 11
Salvation Army Christmas Kettle Campaign*	November
National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women	December 6

*denotes proclamations that include a flag raising or flags lowered to half-mast.