



## Council Policy

**Policy Title:** Flag Policy  
**Policy Number:** CP2016-07  
**Report Number:** LGT2016-0808  
**Adopted by/Date:** 2016 November 07  
**Effective Date:** 2016 November 07  
**Last Amended:** 2025 December 15  
**Policy Owner:** City Clerk's Office

### 1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 All flags are important symbols of honour and pride and must be treated in a respectful and consistent manner.
- 1.2 The City Clerk's Office, Citizen Recognitions & Protocol (Protocol) follows practices which are consistent with accepted guidelines and standards, and align with Canadian Heritage and Alberta Protocol.

### 2. PURPOSE

- 2.1 The purpose of this Council policy is to ensure all flags at the Municipal Complex and other City sites are displayed in a respectful, consistent and appropriate manner.

### 3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 In this Council policy:
  - (a) "City sites" means facilities, properties, buildings and parks managed or owned by The City of Calgary (The City);
  - (b) "Courtesy flagpole" means the designated flagpole located on the north side of the Municipal Plaza for flag raisings;
  - (c) "Dignitary" means a person who holds a high rank or office;
  - (d) "Flag" means a piece of cloth (usually rectangular) of distinctive colour, design, emblem or symbol to represent nations, provinces, states or municipalities. "Flag" is also used to describe a banner: which looks like a flag, bearing a symbol, logo, slogan or other message to represent charitable or non-profit organizations but does not have flag status;
  - (e) "Half-mast" means the position of a flag, approximately halfway up the mast or pole. Flying flags at half-mast is a symbol of respect or mourning;

- (f) “Historic City Hall” means the sandstone building located at 700 Macleod Trail SE. Often referred to as City Hall;
- (g) “Municipal Building” means the blue glass building located at 800 Macleod Trail SE;
- (h) “Municipal Complex” means the three buildings that make up the Municipal Complex: Historic City Hall, Municipal Building and Administration Building;
- (i) “Municipal Complex Bylaw” means Municipal Complex Bylaw 38M2012;
- (j) “Municipal Plaza” means the open space on the west side of the Municipal Building;
- (k) “Order of Precedence” means the positioning of flags in priority of importance, order or rank;
- (l) “Standard” means the flag used by the Royal Family or her Majesty’s Representatives (vice regal persons).

#### **4. APPLICABILITY**

4.1 This Council policy:

- 4.1.1 Governs the display, maintenance, and disposal of flags at all City sites.
- 4.1.2 Takes precedence over all other flag policies, procedures and practices managed by Business Units at The City.

#### **5. PROCEDURE**

##### **5.1 Responsibilities**

##### **5.1.1 Protocol is responsible for:**

- (a) Managing and administering this Council policy.
- (b) Approving and managing all flag raisings and half-masts.
- (c) Issuing the announcements and directives on all flag raisings and half-masts.
- (d) Communicating with relevant stakeholders, internally and externally, and for providing expert advice to Business Units on all matters regarding flags.
- (e) Maintaining, replacing and disposing flags in use at the Municipal Complex.
- (f) Maintaining detailed guidelines to support this Council policy, including flag requests, and ensuring these guidelines are available to the public.



- (g) Consulting with the City Clerk, Mayor's Office, City Manager's Office, Alberta Protocol and Canadian Heritage as required.

**5.1.2 Facility Management is responsible for:**

- (a) Ensuring the flagpoles and equipment at the Municipal Complex and other designated City sites (in accordance with established practice) are in good operating condition.
- (b) Ensuring appropriate notification to Protocol when a requestor is planning a ceremony on the Municipal Plaza that includes a flag raising.

**5.1.3 Corporate Security is responsible for:**

- (a) The activities required to raise, lower or replace flags at the Municipal Complex or other designated City sites (in accordance with established practice), at the direction of Protocol.

**5.1.4 Other Business Units are responsible for:**

- (a) Implementing this Council policy for flags at their City sites other than the Municipal Complex, in consultation with Protocol.

**5.2 General**

**5.2.1 Displaying the Flag**

- (a) Flags shall be flown on separate poles.
- (b) Flags shall be flown at the same height.
- (c) Flags flown in a group shall all be the same size.
- (d) Flags may be flown at night.

**5.2.2 Precedence**

- (a) The City, at all City sites, follows the Order of Precedence established by Canadian Heritage.
- (b) The Calgary flag takes precedence over all charitable and non-profit organization flags unless otherwise established by Canadian Heritage.

**5.2.3 Flags flown Permanently at the Municipal Complex**

- (a) Historic City Hall: The following flags shall be flown from the flagpoles in front of Historic City Hall, in the Order of Precedence:
  - i. Canada
  - ii. Alberta
  - iii. Royal Union (Union Jack)
  - iv. Calgary
  - v. Treaty 7
- (b) Municipal Building:
  - i. The provincial and territorial flags are flown in front of the Municipal Building in the order based on the date of entry into Confederation, starting with the provinces followed by the territories.



- ii. The Canada, Alberta and Calgary flags shall be in the Council Chamber, along with any other flags approved by Council.

#### **5.2.4 City Sites**

- (a) Business Units shall consult with Protocol when planning to add or remove flags or flagpoles outside the premises of existing or new sites.
- (b) Where external tenants are located at City sites and wish to fly flags outside the buildings, they shall consult with Facility Management and Protocol prior to displaying their flags.

### **5.3 Flag Raisings**

#### **5.3.1 General**

- (a) The City may fly flags on its premises on a temporary basis to mark special and ceremonial occasions, with the exception of flags of nations.
- (b) All flag raisings in this section take place on the courtesy flagpole.
- (c) Protocol will assess flag raising requests based on the following criteria:
  - i. The City may not normally fly flags which may be considered controversial or divisive.
  - ii. The City will not fly a flag of an organization whose undertakings or philosophy espouse violence, hatred or racism or are contrary to City bylaws or policies.
  - iii. The City will not fly flags of a commercial, religious or partisan nature.
- (d) Flags must be in excellent condition and conform to Protocol's guidelines.
- (e) Flags are flown for one day from sunrise to sunset.
- (f) Protocol reserves the right to cancel a flag raising in the case of unforeseen circumstances.
- (g) Protocol will exercise discretion, in consultation with the Mayor's Office, in determining whether exceptions to any of the criteria in this section shall be considered.

#### **5.3.2 Flags of Organizations**

- (a) The City may fly the flag of a charitable or non-profit organization, to celebrate a special occasion or achievement in Calgary.
- (b) It is the responsibility of the requesting organization to submit an application for a flag to be flown, as well as supply the flag to represent the organization or event.
- (c) If a flag raising is requested as part of a larger ceremony, applicants must make appropriate arrangements in accordance to the Municipal Complex Bylaw for the use of the Municipal Plaza.

### **5.3.3 Professional Sports Teams**

- (a) The City will fly the flag of a Calgary professional sports team on the occasion of the team winning their league championship at the national or international level.
- (b) The flag will be supplied by the team and flown on a designated day, as agreed to with the team.

### **5.3.4 Sister Cities**

- (a) The City does not fly the flags of its sister cities on a permanent basis.
- (b) The City may fly the flag of a sister city, as recommended by Protocol, on the occasion of an official delegation visiting Calgary or another significant event pertaining to the sister city relationship.

## **5.4 Dignitaries**

### **5.4.1 Royal Family or Her Majesty's representatives:**

- (a) When a member of the Royal Family or her Majesty's representatives visits Historic City Hall or is hosted by The City, Protocol may determine if and where a Standard is to be flown. The Standard takes precedence over the Canada flag.

## **5.5 Half-Masts**

### **5.5.1 General**

- (a) Flying a flag at half-mast is recognition of a significant death, and a symbolic expression of collective mourning.
- (b) Protocol will direct that flags will be lowered to half-mast to acknowledge a solemn occasion.
- (c) Unless otherwise prescribed in this Council policy, Protocol will determine and direct the extent of half-masts, including the locations and duration. Protocol will send a notice to all relevant business units instructing them to half-mast the flags.
- (d) Business Units do not have approval or authority to lower their flags until such notice is received from Protocol.
- (e) A half-mast takes precedence over all flag raisings.
- (f) On occasions requiring flags to be flown at half-mast, all flags in a group, or those displayed together shall be flown at half-mast.
- (g) This Council policy is not meant to impede the standards of practice of the Calgary Fire Department or Calgary Police Service with regards to honouring their members. Protocol shall be informed in advance when a half-mast is scheduled.

### **5.5.2 Annual Occasions**

- (a) To commemorate the following occasions, flags will be flown at half-mast, from sunrise to sunset on the following days:

|      | <b>Date</b>              | <b>Occasion</b>  | <b>City Sites at Half-Mast</b>                       |
|------|--------------------------|--|--|
| i.   | April 9                  | National Day of Remembrance of the Battle of Vimy Ridge  | Municipal Complex                                    |
| ii.  | April 28                 | Day of Mourning for Persons Killed or Injured in the Workplace<br>(also known as National Day of Mourning) | City-wide  |
| iii. | June 23                  | National Day of Remembrance for Victims of Terrorism   | Municipal Complex                                    |
| iv.  | Last Sunday in September | Police and Peace Officers' National Memorial Day   | Municipal Complex, Police Stations and Fire Stations |
| v.   | November 11              | Remembrance Day  | City-wide  |
| vi.  | December 6               | National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women   | Municipal Complex                                    |

### 5.5.3 Dignitaries

- (a) Flags will be flown at half-mast at all City sites from the time of notification of death until sunset the day of the funeral or the memorial service for the following individuals:
- i. The Sovereign,
  - ii. Member of the immediate Royal Family,
  - iii. Current or former Governor General of Canada,
  - iv. Current or former Prime Minister of Canada,
  - v. Current or former Lieutenant Governor of Alberta,
  - vi. Current or former Premier of Alberta, or
  - vii. Current Mayor and Councillors.
- (b) Flags will be flown at half-mast at Historic City Hall on the day of the funeral or the memorial service for the following individuals:
- i. Current Federal Cabinet Minister from Alberta,
  - ii. Current Provincial (Alberta) Cabinet Minister,
  - iii. Current Calgary Member of Parliament or Calgary Member of the Legislative Assembly
  - iv. Current Senator from Calgary,
  - v. Current Treaty 7 Chiefs, or
  - vi. Former Mayors and Councillors.
- (c) In the event of the death of any other dignitary, flags may be lowered to half-mast. Protocol will liaise with the Mayor's Office, City Clerk, City Manager's Office, Alberta Protocol, and Canadian



Heritage as required. Protocol will provide appropriate instruction as to whether The City will lower flags, and if so, the duration and locations.

**5.5.4 City of Calgary Employees**

- (a) Flags will not be flown at half-mast for City employees unless the employee dies in the line of duty or by reason of the position he or she occupies within The City.
- (b) In such cases, Protocol will consult with the City Manager’s Office, Human Resources and the Mayor’s Office regarding the decision, the duration and locations.

**5.5.5 Canadian Armed Forces Members**

- (a) Flags will be flown at half-mast on the day of the funeral for a Canadian Armed Forces member killed in active service who was born in Calgary or Alberta, or whose current Canadian posting is in Alberta.

**5.5.6 Solemn Occasions**

- (a) Solemn occasions may arise not covered within this Council policy. In those cases, Protocol will liaise with the Mayor’s Office, City Clerk, City Manager’s Office, Alberta Protocol, and Canadian Heritage as required. Protocol will recommend whether a half-mast or another form of recognition is appropriate.
- (b) No flags of other nations shall be flown, or lowered to half-mast in reference to this Section.

**5.6 Care and Disposal of Flags**

- 5.6.1** When a flag becomes worn, noticeably faded or unfit for service it must be disposed of in a respectful manner.
- 5.6.2** Business Units are responsible for disposing of flags flown at their sites and shall consult with Protocol regarding the appropriate methods.

**6. AMENDMENT(S)**

| Date of Council Decision | Report/By-Law | Description  |
|--------------------------|---------------|--|
| 15 December 2025         | EC2025-1029   | Update policy to discontinue the practice of flying national flags |

**7. REVIEW(S)**

| Date of Policy Owner’s Review | Description |
|-------------------------------|-------------|
| Not applicable                |             |