

Subject: Municipal & Community Flag Raising Policy

Prepared by: Office of the Chief Administrative Officer

Approved by: David Oakes, CAO

Issue Date: August 29, 2025

Review Date: August 29, 2035

Revision Date: February 13, 2025

Scope

The St. Catharines Municipal and Community Flag Raising Policy establishes a clear and consistent framework for managing the display of flags on municipal property. This policy aims to:

- Provide a transparent and equitable process for reviewing and approving flag raising requests. This includes defining eligibility criteria for organizations and events, outlining required documentation, and setting clear timelines for submissions and decisions.
- Ensure that flag raisings prioritize requests from local non-profit, charitable, and community-focused organizations whose missions and activities contribute to the well-being and vibrancy of the city.
- Protect the integrity of the municipal flagpoles and prevent their use for purposes that contradict the City's values and guiding principles.
- Outline protocols for the respectful and dignified displaying of flags, including the order of precedence for multiple flags and adherence to established flag etiquette.
- Establish a formal procedure for half-masting flags on municipal property as a symbol of mourning or remembrance.

Flag locations can be found in Appendix "A". Order of Precedence for Flags in Canada can be found in Appendix "B".

Definitions

Community Flag or Courtesy Flag

A flag that represents a local non-profit, charitable, or community-focused organization, raised on a Municipal Flagpole for a designated period to recognize the organization's contributions or raise awareness for an event or cause.

Courtesy Flagpole

A municipally owned flagpole designated for the temporary display of flags representing community organizations or events.

Designated Dates for Half-Masting

Specific calendar dates established by the federal government and the City of St. Catharines on which flags are flown at half-mast to commemorate a national tragedy, honour a specific event, or mourn a significant individual.

Eligible Organization

A non-profit, charitable, or community-based organization operating within the City of St. Catharines, whose mission and activities align with the City's values and are deemed suitable for recognition through a flag raising.

Flag Raising Ceremony

A formal or informal event organized to mark the raising of a flag on a Municipal Flagpole, often involving representatives from the featured organization, City officials, and members of the public.

Flag(s)

All flags on display at a City facility.

Municipal Flag

The flag that represents the municipality of the City of St. Catharines.

Municipal Flagpole

The designated flagpole(s) located on property owned and maintained by the City of St. Catharines, intended for the display of flags in accordance with the established policy.

Half-Masting of Flags

Procedure

- The flag is raised to the top of the mast and then immediately and slowly lowered to the half-mast position.
- The center of the flag should be placed halfway down the staff.
- All flags flown together should be flown at half-mast, unless otherwise specified (e.g., the death of a retired employee).
- Flags are only half-masted on Municipal Flagpoles with halyards and pulleys.
- Flags flown from buildings from horizontal or angled poles without halyards are not half-masted.

War Memorials and Cenotaphs

Flag poles at War Memorials and Cenotaphs, excluding the Cenotaph at City Hall, follow [federal guidelines and standards only](#) and are exempt from this policy.

Observances

The City of St. Catharines follows the guidelines for the designated dates for half masting of flags at all City facilities on specific occasions and dates as posted by the federal government. This list is defined by the Department of Canadian Heritage [Rules for Half-Masting the National Flag of Canada](#).

Flags are half-masted upon the death of:

- The Sovereign
- A member of the Royal Family related in the first degree to the Sovereign (spouse, son or daughter, father, mother, brother or sister)
- The Governor General
- The Prime Minister
- A former Governor General
- A former Prime Minister
- A federal cabinet minister
- The Lieutenant Governor
- The Premier or other person similarly honored by the province
- The local member of the House of Commons
- The local member of the provincial legislature
- The Mayor or former Mayor
- City Councillor or former City Councillors
- A current City employee
- A retired City employee (only the City flag, or the Canadian flag if a City flag is not available, is lowered on the day of the funeral)
- A current or former resident of the City of St. Catharines who have meaningfully and demonstrably advance the social, economic, environmental and/or cultural well-being of the City, at the discretion of the Mayor or designate.

Flags shall be lowered to half-mast from the date of death until the date of the funeral, unless otherwise specified. Specific provisions for current City employees and retired City employees are outlined below.

Flags are half-masted annually from sunrise to sunset on these commemorative dates:

- **January 27:** International Holocaust Remembrance Day
- **April 9:** Vimy Ridge Day
- **April 28:** National Day of Mourning

- **June 23:** National Day of Remembrance for Victims of Terrorism
- **Second Sunday in September:** Firefighters' National Memorial Day (unless half-masting occurs near the place where a memorial is being observed; in this case, half-masting occurs until sunset according to the prescribed order of service).
- **Last Sunday in September:** Police and Peace Officers' National Memorial Day (unless half-masting occurs near the place where a memorial is being observed; in this case, half-masting occurs until sunset according to the prescribed order of service).
- **September 30:** National Day for Truth and Reconciliation
- **November 8:** Indigenous Veterans Day
- **November 11:** Remembrance Day
 - Half-masting occurs at 11:00 am or according to the prescribed order of service at or near a cenotaph or another site where services are being observed.
 - Flags are lowered to half-mast at the beginning of the Remembrance Day service at City Hall at 11:00 am, and are raised again at the end of the service. City staff lower the flags to half-mast again a half-hour later, and they remain at half-mast until sunset.
- **December 6:** National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

The Mayor, Chief Administrative Officer or an assigned representative can also direct that flags be lowered for reasons other than those listed above.

Passing of a Current Employee

Step 1: When Human Resources (HR) receives notification of an employee's death, either from the family or through internal verification, they are responsible for informing several key parties:

- The Office of the Mayor
- The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)
- The Director of Corporate Support Services

Step 2: The CAO, or an assigned representative, directs the Flag Protocol Team (Appendix "C") to implement the protocol for lowering flags in recognition of the employee's death. This involves lowering:

- The City flag
- The Canadian flag
- Any other flags that may be flying at City facilities

Flags will remain lowered for 5 business days following the date that notification was received by the City.

Step 3: The City's communication department will update the webpage/webbanner to state that the flag has been lowered to half-mast in observance of the passing of a City employee.

Passing of a Retired Employee

Step 1: When Human Resources (HR) is notified of a retired employee's death, either by a family member or through their own verification processes, HR is responsible for informing the following:

- The Office of the Mayor
- The Office of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)
- The Director of Corporate Support Services

Step 2: The CAO, or an assigned representative, will direct the Flag Protocol Team to lower the City flag at half-mast. If a City flag is not available at the municipal location, the Canadian flag may be lowered instead. The lowering of the flag will be at the discretion of the Office of the CAO.

Flags will remain lowered for 3 business days following the date that notification was received by the City.

Step 3: The City's communication department will update the webpage/web banner to state that the flag has been lowered to half-mast in observance of the passing of a City employee.

Community Flag Raising

Procedure

Community Flags will be raised in the following order, as applicable:

- **Courtesy Flagpole** (used first)
- **Haudenosaunee Flagpole** (used second)
- **City Flagpole** (used third)
- **Provincial Flagpole** (used last, if necessary)

Flags will only be raised in accordance with these guidelines, ensuring that the flag raising respects the cultural and institutional significance of each flagpole.

Flag raising will be performed by a designated facilities staff member. In instances where flags are currently at half-mast, such as for periods of mourning, the community

flag raising ceremony will include first raising the flag to the top of the pole before respectfully lowering it to the half-mast position.

Eligible Requests

The City will consider flag raising requests for the following purposes:

- Causes or events within the City of St. Catharines that may include:
 - Public awareness and education campaigns
 - Charitable fundraising campaigns
 - Arts, athletic, historical, and cultural celebrations
- Recognition of an organization within the City of St. Catharines that has achieved national or international distinction or has made a significant contribution to the City of St. Catharines.
- To recognize the visit of a head of state or dignitaries from other governments for the duration of the visit or for one week, whichever is shorter.
- To acknowledge the visit of representatives from other governments with which the City has a relationship, such as twinning arrangements or memberships with organizations like the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) or the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO).
- Special recognitions and honours at the discretion of the Mayor and/or City Council.

Ineligible Requests

The following requests will not be considered for flag raising:

- Requests to fly flags of international countries to maintain neutrality and prevent the perception of endorsing any particular foreign government, political system, or international cause.*
- Matters of controversial, ideological, or individual conviction.
- Religious events or observances.
- Events, observances or celebrations pertaining to political states other than Canada.
- Political events or observances, including requests related to political parties and candidates in any election.
- Events or organizations with no direct connection to the City of St. Catharines.
- Campaigns or events that are contrary to City policies and/or by-laws.
- Campaigns or events intended for profit-making purposes.
- Memorial requests for individuals, unless in conjunction with a broader cause (for example, the Terry Fox Run)
- Personal or private observances including but not limited to anniversaries and birthdays.

- Topics that are contentious, inappropriate, offensive and/or carry potential reputational risk to the City.
- Content or community group affiliations that are inconsistent with the City's commitment to create an environment of equity and equality in the government and in the community for all people regardless of their race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, disability, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, family status, immigrant status, receipt of public assistance, political affiliation, religious affiliation, level of literacy, language and/or socio-economic status.

* the display of international flags is typically reserved for specific, official events coordinated by the City, where context and intent can be clearly defined.

Community Flag Raising Ceremony Requests

To request a flag raising ceremony, requesters must follow the steps outlined below:

Step 1: Submit a Request

- Complete the Flag Raising Request Form, which is available on the Mayor's webpage (see Appendix "D").
- Submit the completed form at least 6 weeks prior to the requested flag raising date, but no more than 1 year in advance.

Step 2: Review of Request

- The Mayor's Office staff will receive and review the Flag Raising Request Form.
- Staff will review the request in accordance with the policy and communicate the decision to the Requestor.
- The Mayor or an assigned representative reserves the right to approve or deny any requests based on the criteria outlined in this policy. There is no appeal process for requests that are denied.
- If requested, Staff will forward the invitation to the Member of Parliament (MP) and Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) and include the event in the City's Community Events calendar as well as the Councillor's calendars.
- Staff will reserve the front yard of City Hall in the facilities booking system and send the meeting request to the Supervisor, City Facilities and Horticulture Supervisor for information. Staff may also forward the meeting request to the Manager of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion where applicable.

Step 3: Flag Submission and Pickup

- Requestors must drop off their flag no later than two business days prior to the scheduled flag raising.
- Requestors must pick up the flag within two weeks after it has been taken down.

Flag Raising Ceremony Guidelines

- Flag raising ceremonies will be scheduled only during City Hall's regular business hours, Monday through Friday, from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM. They will not be scheduled on weekends or holidays.
- Flags may not be displayed for more than one month at a time, which could range from 28 to 31 days, depending on the month.
- Only one request per organization per year will be accepted, unless approved at the discretion of the Mayor.
- Community or Courtesy Flags must be 36" x 72" (standard size) and of grommet style.
- The Mayor's Office does not store flags on behalf of organization

Appendix A

Locations

- Ansul Park, 320 Lakeshore Road (at start of Canal Parkway)
- City Hall, 50 Church Street
- Community Park, 4 Seymour Street
- Dunlop Drive Older Adult Centre, 80 Dunlop Drive
- Former Lincoln County Court House, 101 King Street
- Fire Hall Headquarters, 64 Geneva Street
- Fire Hall #2, 190 Linwell Road
- Fire Hall #3, 285 Pelham Road
- Fire Hall #4, 427 Merritt Street
- Fire Hall #5, 149 Martindale Road
- Fire Hall #6, 465 Scott Street
- Jaycee Park, 534 Ontario Street
- Kiwanis Field, 240 St. Paul Street West (seasonal)
- Kiwanis Aquatics Centre, 425 Carlton Street
- Lancaster Park, 31 Wood Street (seasonal)
- McCaffery Park, 61 Vansickle Road (seasonal)
- Meridian Centre, 1 IceDogs Way
- Morningstar Mill, 2714 Decew Road
- Port Dalhousie Older Adult Centre, 19 Brock Street
- St. Catharines Public Library, Central Library, 54 Church Street
- St. Catharines Public Library, Port Dalhousie Branch, 23 Brock Street
- Municipal Golf Course (clubhouse), 37 Lincoln Avenue (seasonal)
- Polish Monument, 242A Niagara Street
- Queenston and Church
- St. Catharines Transit, 2012 First Street Louth
- Rotary Park, 395 Pelham Road
- Transportation & Environmental Services, Service Centre, 383 Lake Street

Appendix B

Order of Precedence for Flags in Canada

The Sovereign's Flag

The Sovereign's Flag for Canada indicates the presence of The King when he is in Canada. It can be flown from buildings he is visiting and on modes of transportation (e.g., a ship, airplane or car) he is using while in Canada. It takes precedence over all other flags.

The Canadian Flag

The Canadian flag takes precedence over all other national flags in Canada, except for the The Sovereign's Flag for Canada.

Royal Family Flags

Personal flags of other members of the Royal Family may be flown during official duty in Canada. However, only the flag of the highest-ranking member present is displayed.

The Governor General's Flag

The Governor General's flag takes precedence over all other flags in Canada, except for the The Sovereign's Flag **for Canada** and the Lieutenant Governor's flag on provincial occasions.

Lieutenant Governor's Flags

The flags of the Lieutenant Governors follow a precedence similar to the Governor General's flag.

The Union Jack

The Union Jack represents the United Kingdom and symbolizes membership in the Commonwealth and allegiance to the Crown. Its precedence depends on the context, with the Canadian flag taking precedence when only one Municipal Flagpole is available.

Provincial and Territorial Flags

Provincial and territorial flags are flown based on their entry into Confederation:

1. Ontario (1867)
2. Quebec (1867)
3. Nova Scotia (1867)
4. New Brunswick (1867)
5. Manitoba (1870)
6. Northwest Territories (1870)
7. British Columbia (1871)
8. Prince Edward Island (1873)
9. Yukon (1898)

10. Saskatchewan (1905)
11. Alberta (1905)
12. Newfoundland (1949)
13. Nunavut (1999)

Municipal Flag

The Municipal Flag follows the provincial and territorial flags in the order of precedence.

Haudenosaunee Flag

The Haudenosaunee flag follows the Municipal Flag in precedence.

Community and Courtesy Flags

Flags representing an Eligible Organization are flown last.

Appendix C

St. Catharines Flag Protocol Team

Office of the Chief Administrative Officer

- Chief Administrative Officer
- Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
- Executive Administrator – CAO's Office
- Manager of Corporate Communications
- Communications Team

Office of the Mayor

- Mayor
- Chief of Staff
- Administrative Assistant – Mayor's Office (2)

Engineering, Facilities, Environmental Services

- Director, Engineering, Facilities, Environmental Services
- Manager of Facilities and Energy
- Supervisor, City Facilities
- Supervisors of Recreation Facilities & Facilities Maintenance
- Building Custodian

Municipal Works

- Director of Municipal Works
- Manager of Green Infrastructure Operations
- Supervisor II, Cemetery Services
- Horticulture Supervisor
- Manager of Operations Administration

Fire & Emergency Services

- Fire Chief
- Deputy Fire Chief (2)
- Captains
- Platoon Chiefs
- Office Administrator

Corporate Support Services

- Director, Corporate Support Services
- Manager of Customer Service
- Manager, Human Resources
- Citizen's First Team

Community Recreation and Culture Services

- Manager, Recreation and Culture Programs
- Aquatics Supervisor
- Older Adult Co-Ordinator

St. Catharines Public Library

- Business Administrator & Administration

Administrative Steering Committee

- Administrators from each Department in City of St. Catharines

Appendix D

Mayor's Office: Flag Raising Request

[Mayor's Office - St. Catharines](#)

- [Flag Raising Request - St Catharines](#) : <https://webforms.stcatharines.ca/Flag-Raising-Request>