

**JEFFERSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

AGENDA REQUEST

TO: Board of Commissioners

FROM: Shawn Frederick, Central Services Director

DATE: January 13, 2025

RE: Flag Policy

STATEMENT OF ISSUE:

Proper display of the United States Flag should follow protocol outlined in United States Flag Code ([4 USC Ch.1](#)). Additionally, Washington State provides additional guidance when the United States Flag, Washington State Flag, and POW/MIA flags are flown, displayed, or installed.

Currently there is no local protocol or policy informing proper display of the flag for Jefferson County owned facilities.

ANALYSIS:

It is appropriate for Jefferson County to develop policy consistent with United States Flag Code and Washington State guidance to ensure proper display of the flag at County Facilities, Chambers, and Courtrooms.

FISCAL IMPACT:

N/A

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommend approval of the Flag policy.

REVIEWED BY:


Mark McCauley, County Administrator

Date 1/10/25

STATE OF WASHINGTON
County of Jefferson

**In the Matter of Adopting a Jefferson County
Flag Policy**

RESOLUTION NO.

WHEREAS, United States Flag Code, [4 USC Ch.1](#), governs display of the United States Flag; and

WHEREAS, according to the Washington [Secretary of State](#), the Washington State flag should be displayed in the next highest position of honor after the U.S. flag and the flags of any other nations. It should be displayed in a higher position of honor than the flags of other states, counties, cities, or entities; and

WHEREAS, State law requires every city, town, and county to display the U.S. flag, the Washington State flag, and the Prisoner of War/Missing (POW/MIA) flag upon or near its principal building on certain days enumerated in RCW [1.20.017](#); and

WHEREAS, currently there is no local protocol or policy informing proper display of the flag for Jefferson County owned facilities; and

WHEREAS, Jefferson County Central Services Department has created the attached Jefferson County Flag Policy as reflected in [Attachment A](#); and

NOW, THEREFORE, THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF JEFFERSON COUNTY, WASHINGTON, HEREBY RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Whereas Clauses are Findings of Fact. The Jefferson County Board of Commissioners hereby adopts the above “Whereas” clauses as Findings of Fact.

Section 2. Purpose. The purpose of this resolution is to adopt a Jefferson County Flag Policy.

Section 3. Severability. If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase of this resolution or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of this resolution or its application to other persons or circumstances shall be fully valid and shall not be affected.

Section 4. SEPA Categorical Exemption. This resolution is categorically exempt from the State Environmental Policy Act under WAC [197-11-800 \(19\)](#).

Section 5. Effective Date. This resolution shall take effect and be in full force immediately upon adoption and approval by the Board of County Commissioners.

(SIGNATURES FOLLOW ON THE NEXT PAGE)

ADOPTED and APPROVED this _____ day of _____, 2024.

SEAL:

JEFFERSON COUNTY BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Heidi Eisenhour, Chair
Commissioner, District 2

Greg Brotherton, Member
Commissioner, District 3

Heather Dudley-Nollette, Member
Commissioner, District 1

ATTEST:

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Carolyn Gallaway, CMC Date
Clerk of the Board

Philip C. Hunsucker, Date
Chief Civil Deputy Prosecuting Attorney

Policy for the Display of the Flag at County Facilities

I. PURPOSE

The Purpose of this policy is to establish clear guidelines on how and when to display the National and State Flags, ensure proper respect and reverence for the flag by outlining details such as when to fly it at half-staff, and act as a code of etiquette to prevent disrespectful handling of the flag.

II. POLICY STATEMENT

Jefferson County is responsible for regulating the official display of flags inside and outside of County facilities. It is the specific intent of the Board of County Commissioners to follow the United States Flag Code. Additionally, per RCW 1.20.017 the County must display the National League of families' POW/MIA flag in addition to the United States and flag of the state on designated days.

III. GENERAL GUIDANCE

Jefferson County staff will ensure the United States flag is displayed following the protocol in the United States Flag Code (4 U.S.C. Ch.1). The code, in particular, states that:

- a. The U.S. flag should be displayed every day of the year, except on the days of inclement weather unless an all-weather flag is displayed, on or near the main administration building of every public institution.
- b. It is customary to fly the U.S. flag only during daylight hours, but it may be flown permanently if properly illuminated at night.
- c. The U.S. Flag should fly in the highest position of honor, and no flag may be flown higher.
- d. The U.S. Flag should be to the flag's own right, that is, to the observer's left. All other flags would be to the U.S. flag's own left.
- e. The U.S. Flag should be hoisted briskly and lowered ceremoniously.

IV. WASHINGTON STATE FLAG

Per the Washington the Secretary of State, the Washington State Flag is to be displayed in the next highest position of honor after the U.S. Flag and the flags of any other nations. It should be displayed in a higher position of honor than the flag of any other states, counties, cities, or entities.

V. POW/MIA FLAG

State law requires every city, town, and county to display the U.S. flag, the Washington State flag, and the Prisoner of War/Missing (POW/MIA) flag upon or near its principal building on the following days (RCW 1.20.017):

- a. March 30 (Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day)
- b. April 9 (Former Prisoners of War Recognition Day)
- c. Third Saturday in May (Armed Forces Day)
- d. Last Monday in May (Memorial Day)

- e. June 14 (Flag Day)
- f. July 4 (Independence Day)
- g. July 27 (Korean War Veterans Armistice Day)
- h. Third Friday in September (POW/MIA Recognition Day)
- i. November 11 (Veterans' Day)
- j. December 7 (Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day)

If the designated day falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the POW/MIA flag must be displayed on the preceding Friday. When the U.S., Washington State, and POW/MIA flags are flown on a single pole, the U.S. flag should be on top, followed by the POW/MIA flag, and then the state flag. If there are two poles, the POW/MIA flag should be flown under the U.S. flag while the state flag is on the other pole.

VI. LOWERING FLAGS TO HALF-STAFF

While state law provides no guidance on the lowering of flags to half-staff, local governments do have the authority to lower both the U.S. and Washington State flags along with any others. The flag shall be flown at half-staff 30 days from the death of the President or a former President; 10 days from the day of death of the Vice President, the Chief Justice or a retired Chief Justice of the United States, or the Speaker of the House of Representatives; from the day of death until interment of an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, a Secretary of an executive or military department, a former Vice President, or the Governor of a State, territory, or possession; and on the day of death and the following day for a Member of Congress. The flag shall be flown at half-staff on Peace Officers Memorial Day, unless that day is also Armed. The governor may order flags to be lowered to commemorate the passing of notable individuals, as well as certain specified days of remembers, such as:

- a. National Firefighters Memorial Day, May
- b. Peace Officers Memorial Day, May 15 (unless that day is also Armed Forces Day)
- c. Memorial Day, flag lowered from sunrise to noon
- d. Patriot Day, September 11
- e. National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, December 7
- f. In the event of the death of a principal federal or state government official
- g. In the event of the death of a state government employee, or a member of the public safety community, killed in the line of duty
- h. In the event of the death of a member of the armed forces from Washington state while serving on active duty

VII. REFERENCES

- a. 4 USC Ch. 1: U.S. Flag Code – Rules of protocol for displaying the American flag.
- b. Washington Secretary of State: State Flag – Information on the state flag.
- c. Governor's Office: Flag Lowering – Readers may sign up to receive an email when the governor directs flags to be lowered to half-staff.

- d. Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs: POW/MIA Flag – Information on obtaining and displaying a POW/MIA flag
- e. MRSC – Overview of Flag Display for local governments in Washington State