

Flag Ceremonies

Many ceremonies include a flag ceremony, which honors the American flag as the symbol of our country. Your troop might have a flag ceremony –

- As part of an investiture, rededication, fly-up or court of awards ceremony
- As part of a ceremony on a Girl Scout special day
- As a way to open or close a troop meeting or camp day
- At a community ceremony or celebration



At a flag ceremony you say the Pledge of Allegiance. You might also sing a patriotic song and repeat the Girl Scout Promise and Law as part of the flag ceremony.

Flying the flag

The United States flag, the symbol of our country, should be treated with respect. The most important thing to remember is that when you fly the American flag in the United States, you always give it the position of honor. You put it either in front of other flags, higher than other flags, or to the right of other flags. In the United States, when a group of flags are together, no flag is ever larger or flown higher than the American flag.

Points to remember if doing an international ceremony:

- No flag flies above the U.S. flag.
- Flags of different nations fly at the same level and in alphabetical order.
- Flags of states are arranged in alphabetical order or in the order in which they entered the union.
- The World Association flag, Girl Scouts troop flags come after nations and states flags.
- The U.S. flag is posted **last** and picked up **first**.

Other points to remember:

- The flag is not to be carried flat.
- If the flag is hung flat on a wall horizontally or vertically, the field of stars is always to the flag's right.
- The flag should not be allowed to touch the ground
- When carried, the flag should always fly free.
- The flag should be raised quickly and lower slowly.
- Keep the flag clean and in good condition.
- Do not place anything on top of the U.S. flag.
- The color guard salutes the flag after it is posted and before it is removed from its stand.

Holding a flag ceremony

Every flag ceremony has a **color guard**, a team that carries and guards the flags. The term “color guard” came to be used because the American flag is sometimes called “the colors”; however, a color guard may carry and guard other flags as well. The girls who carry the flags are called “flag bearers”. The girls who stand beside the flags are called “guards”. There is also a Girl Scout in charge, whose job is to announce each part of the ceremony.

Color Guard Commands

The following suggested commands are given by the Girl Scout-in-charge (Caller) to give directions to the audience and color guard.

- 1. Will the audience please stand.**
- 2. Color guard advance.** (move to stage or front)
- 3. Color guard present the colors.** (wheel turn, shoulder to shoulder to face the audience, keep the U.S. flag high; slightly lower the others)
- 4. Please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance.**
5. (Song, poem, etc)
- 6. Color guard, post the colors** (flags are placed in stands, U.S. flag last)
- 7. Color guard, honor your colors** (stand back and briefly salute the flag.)
- 8. Color guard, retreat** (leave the area)
- 9. Thank you, please be seated.**

When the flags are to be removed after being posted...

- 1. Will the audience please stand.**
- 2. Color guard, advance.**
- 3. Color guard, honor your colors**
- 4. Color guard, retire the colors**

