

Flag Raising Policy

Flags can be raised and left in situ between 1 May and 30 September each year with ad hoc raising of flags thereafter to recognise special days and event.

Flying the Union Flag

Where UK government buildings only have one flagpole, the Union Flag should be flown every day except on certain occasions when you may wish to fly other flags, including but not limited to, the national flags of the constituent nations of the United Kingdom, the Armed Forces Day flag, the Commonwealth flag, county and other local flags, and other flags which may promote civic pride.

DCMS may issue ad-hoc guidance encouraging UK government buildings to fly such flags throughout the year, alongside the Union Flag

Where UK government buildings have more than one flagpole, and two flags are being flown, the Union Flag must always be flown in the superior position which is either:

- the highest flagpole
- the centre flagpole where there is an odd number of poles of the same height, or
- the left centre flagpole viewed from the front of the building, where there is an even number of poles of the same height

In England, it is now possible to fly more than one flag on the same flagpole if there is enough space. * If so, the Union Flag should always fly on top ('in the superior position'). UK government building flagpoles should not remain empty – the default should be flying the Union Flag if no other flag is being flown.

In Northern Ireland, designated flag flying for Northern Ireland government buildings is governed by legislation rather than this guidance.

Designated days for flying the Union Flag on UK government buildings 2022

- **1 March:** St David's Day (in Wales)
- **14 March:** Commonwealth Day (second Monday in March)
- **17 March:** St Patrick's Day (in Northern Ireland)
- **23 April:** St George's Day (in England)
- **6 May:** Coronation Day
- **24 June:** St John's Day
- **25 June:** Armed Forces Day
- **27 July:** Norfolk Day
- **3 September:** Merchant Navy Day
- **13 November:** Remembrance Day (second Sunday in November)
- **14 November:** Birthday of the King Charles III
- **30 November:** St Andrew's Day (in Scotland)

The day of the opening of a Session of the Houses of Parliament by His Majesty and the day of the prorogation of a Session of the Houses of Parliament by His Majesty. Flags should be flown on these days even if His Majesty does not perform the ceremony in person; flags need to be flown in the Greater London area.

National Guidance gov.uk

The Union Flag is the national flag of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Crown Dependencies, and the Overseas Territories. It is a symbol of national unity and pride. The first Union Flag was created in 1606 and combined the flags of England and Scotland; the present Union Flag dates from 1801.

There are designated days when the Union Flag must be flown on UK government buildings by command of His Majesty the King. However, UK government buildings are encouraged to fly the Union Flag all year around.

This guidance is aimed at UK government buildings. However, we would encourage local authorities and other local organisations to follow suit where they wish to fly flags.

Flags which do not need consent

The full list of flags that do not require consent are:

- Any country's national flag, civil ensign, or civil air ensign
- The flag of the Commonwealth, the United Nations, or any other international organisation of which the United Kingdom is a member
- A flag of any island, county, district, borough, burgh, parish, city, town or village within the United Kingdom
- The flag of the Black Country, East Anglia, Wessex, any Part of Lincolnshire, any Riding of Yorkshire, or any historic county within the United Kingdom
- The flag of Saint David
- The flag of Saint Patrick
- The flag of any administrative area within any country outside the United Kingdom
- Any flag of His Majesty's forces
- The Armed Forces Day flag

The above flags or their flagpoles must not display any advertisement or subject matter additional to the design of the flag, but the Regulations now highlight that you can attach a black mourning ribbon to either the flag or flagpole where the flag cannot be flown at half mast, for example, when flying a flag on a flagpole projecting at an angle from the side of a building.

The use of the word "country" in (1) and (7) of the list above, includes any of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, and any British Overseas Territory. The flags of St George and St Andrew are recognised as the national flags of England and Scotland, but the flags of St David and St Patrick are listed separately as they do not necessarily fall into the category of a country's national flag.

Two flags can also be flown from the same flagpole without the need for consent if:

- both flags are within the list above; or
- one flag is within the list above and the other is within the categories of flag set out under (b) below.

In either case, if one of the flags is the Union Flag, it must be flown in the superior position.

Following the UK's departure from the European Union, the flag of the European Union is no longer included in the list of flags that do not require consent.

Any requests to fly flags will be decided by Full Council.

Useful resources

The College of Arms, the Crown body with responsibility for flags and other heraldic matters for England, Wales and Northern Ireland, has published [frequently asked questions relating to the Union Flag](#).

In England and Wales, flags are treated as advertisements for the purposes of the planning regime, but express advertisement consent is not required to fly the Union flag from a flagpole. The government has published [a guide on the planning rules in England on flying types of flag](#).

In Scotland, flag flying is outside the scope of the advertisement control regime.

*Note: The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2021, which came into force on 24 June 2021, allows for two flags, including at least one national flag, to be flown from the same flagpole.