

INDOOR FLAG CEREMONY

Flying the Flag:

We show respect for our country's flag in many ways. A public law, passed by Congress, describes how everyone should treat the flag. 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. (If you were to hold the flag while facing the people who will see it, your right side would be the flag's own right.) In the United States, when a group of flags are together, no flag is ever larger or flown higher than the American flag.

Saluting the Flag:

You come to attention and salute by placing your right hand over your heart.

- ◆ When the flag is being raised or lowered.
- ◆ Whenever the flag passes you in a room or parade.
- ◆ When you say the Pledge of Allegiance.
- ◆ When the "Star-Spangled Banner", the American national anthem, is playing.

People salute only the flag of their own country. If you are ever in a situation where people from another country are saluting their flag, just come to attention.

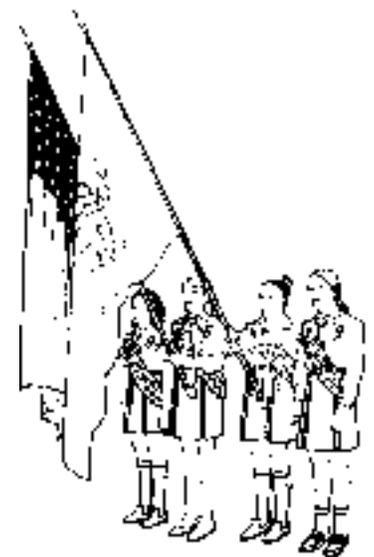
Posting the colors:

- ◆ Participants (or troop) form a horseshoe. The color guard is in position. The Girl Scout in charge says:
"Girl Scouts, attention."
- ◆ The Girl Scout in charge says: "Color guard, advance."
This signals the color guard to advance the flags, salute the American flag, and pick the flags up. Then they turn together and get into position facing the group. Everyone stands at attention.
- ◆ The color guard walks forward carrying the flags to the formation. They stop in front of the standards.
- ◆ The Girl Scout in charge says: "Color guard, post the colors".
This signals the color bearers to place the flags in their stands. They remain at attention next to the flags.
- ◆ The Girl Scout in charge says: "Girl Scouts, honor the flag of your country".
The group salutes the American flag.
- ◆ The Girl Scout in charge says: "Girl Scouts, recite the Pledge of Allegiance."
The Pledge of Allegiance is recited.
- ◆ The Girl Scout in charge says: "Color guard, dismissed",
"Girl Scouts, dismissed."

Retiring the colors: Following the ceremony or meeting, the Girl Scout in charge commands the color guard to retire the colors by taking the flags to their place of storage. The following commands can be used:

- ◆ "Girl Scouts, attention"
- ◆ "Color guard, advance"
- ◆ "Color guard, honor your flag"
- ◆ "Color guard, retire the colors"
- ◆ "Color guard, dismissed"
- ◆ "Girl Scouts, dismissed"

Adapted from "Indoor Flag Ceremony" printed in *Ceremonies in Girl Scouting*.



THE IMPORTANCE OF GIRL SCOUT FLAG CEREMONIES

The purpose of the Girl Scout program is “to inspire girls with the highest ideals of character, conduct, patriotism, and service that they may become happy and resourceful citizens.” The activities that we do with girls must result in accomplishing this purpose.

As a part of building character and modeling good conduct, we must teach girls the skills they need to develop a sense of patriotism and a desire to perform community service. Knowing how to handle an American flag and being able to do a flag ceremony correctly is one of the most important skills that a Girl Scout learns. It is also one of the most important ways that we can increase our positive image in our communities.

Girl Scouts should be able to volunteer to “present the colors” (do a flag ceremony) at public events, school activities, United Way meetings, etc. But, we must be able to do a ceremony correctly. We must become expert at presenting a basic flag ceremony! With this in mind, we’re asking every leader to review the flag ceremony information on this insert and have girls perform a respectful flag ceremony at every troop meeting. (See the other side of this page and also refer to pages 15-19 in the “Ceremonies in Girl Scouting.”)

The “Girl Scout in Charge” or “Caller” leads the ceremony. She begins by asking the audience to please stand for the ceremony—before she commands the color guard to advance. She is the one who announces the parts of the ceremony and leads the audience in participating as appropriate. She should be coached to speak loudly and clearly and to allow enough time for the audience to react, and for each part of the ceremony to happen.

Each flag carried should have one girl who bears the flag, and one who escorts or guards it. The flag escorts must always be ready to help the flag bearers—especially to make sure that the American flag does not touch the floor or ground—and to help with the posting.

Girl Scouts performing a flag ceremony must wear complete Girl Scout uniforms. The “dress” uniform is preferred. The girls in the flag ceremony do not talk or sing during the ceremony, or react to each other or to the audience. They stand at attention and hold the flag or flags while the ceremony takes place. If the flags are being posted, the color guard members salute the flag by putting their hands over their hearts before returning to their line up. The final act of the ceremony is to post the colors or to retire the colors.

The girls should all know that the American flag is always given the position of honor. The American flag always leads the color guard. When carried in a line of other flags, the American flag should be positioned to its own right. When on display, it should be placed to the right of a speaker or staging area, while other flags are placed to the left. It is always at the center and at the highest point of the group when a number of flags of states, localities, or organizations are grouped and displayed from staffs. In the ceremony, the American flag is the first flag to be posted and the first to be lifted out of the flag stand to be retired.

The United States is facing challenging times in the world. Let’s show our patriotism by emphasizing our skills at honoring our flag. Let’s teach each other the right way to do a flag ceremony and practice until we’re perfect!

