On June 14, 1923 the National Flag Code was adopted at the National Flag Conference.

The meeting was held in Washington D.C. to establish procedures for displaying the United States Flag.

The code was based on Army and Navy practices. In 1942, Congress passed a joint resolution to make the Flag Code a law.

June 14 is celebrated as Flag Day. Although it is a law, there are no penalties and the Flag Code is a voluntary guide for showing respect to the U.S. Flag.

Forty-seven states have their own laws with penalties that prohibit desecration of the flag or its use for advertising or publicity.

Flag Etiquette

• The U.S. Flag should be displayed from sunrise to sunset, unless it is well lit during the darkness.

• The U.S. Flag should always be placed above other flags and pennants. There is one exception during a special Navy ceremony at sea.

• On a stage, the U.S. Flag should always be placed behind the speaker and to his/her right.

• When hanging the U.S. Flag vertically or horizontally from a wall or window, the canton, or union, should be at the top right of the flag. When you face the flag, it should be on your left.

• On Memorial Day, the U.S. Flag is flown at half staff until noon, and then raised until sunset.

• The President of the United States, governors and limited other government officials may direct the U.S. Flag to be flown at half staff.

• The U.S. Flag should not be allowed to touch the ground, but if it does, you are not required to destroy it as long as it is still suitable for display.

• It is acceptable to wash or dry clean a U.S. Flag to keep it in good shape.

• Only all-weather U.S. Flags made of non-absorbent material should be displayed during bad weather.

• When a U.S. Flag has served its life, it should be destroyed, preferably by burning. Many American Legion posts have special ceremonies on Flag Day, June 14. You may have your own ceremony to discreetly burn worn out flags.

• Never use a U.S. Flag to cover a statue or monument or drape the flag over the hood, top, sides or back of a vehicle, train or boat.

• The U.S. Flag should not be used as wearing apparel, including costumes or athletic uniforms, bedding or drapery.

• Every schoolhouse should display the U.S. Flag during school days.

• The U.S. Flag should never be used for advertising purposes.