

Guidance Notes for Flying Flags on Leicester City Council Buildings

The National flag of the United Kingdom is the Union Flag. The Union Flag is a combination of the cross of St George (patron saint of England), the cross of St Andrew (patron saint of Scotland) and the cross of St Patrick (patron saint of Ireland), as shown below.

Union Flag	
St George (England National Flag) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross Gules in a field (red cross on a white background) 	
St Patrick <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saltire Gules in a field Argent (red diagonal cross on a white background) 	
St Andrew (Scotland National Flag) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saltire Argent in a field Azure (white diagonal cross on a blue background) 	

The Union Flag was introduced in 1606 after the union of the kingdoms of England and Scotland under one sovereign. The cross of St Patrick was added in 1801 after the union of Great Britain and Ireland.

The correct orientation of the Union Flag when flying is with the broader diagonal band of white uppermost in the hoist (i.e. near the pole) and the narrower diagonal band of white uppermost in the fly (i.e. furthest from the pole).

On 25th March 2008 the Department for Culture Media & Sport announced that UK government buildings in England, Scotland & Wales have the freedom to fly the Union Flag at all times, if they wish to do so.

Leicester City Council's established policy will be to fly the Union Flag at all times in line with national custom and practice from the main flag poles at the Town Hall and City Hall. The City Flag (cinquefoil) will also fly from City Hall.

Other flags will be flown from City Hall and Town Hall Balcony on an annual basis to mark certain events and celebrations, including St George's Day, Armed Forces Week and Leicester Pride.

When there are events that may require the flying of the Union Flag at half-mast or the flying of other national flags, the City Council will follow official guidance issued from the Department of Communities & Local Government which sets out flag arrangements for national and local government buildings. The guidance generally sets out from when flags should be flown and when they should be taken down. It is however always the case that, by special command of The Queen, the Union Flag may be flown at half-mast.

The City Council may in certain circumstances choose to deviate from this policy in circumstances where it is important to convey sympathy and support with a city, country or locality which Leicester has a particular and established relationship with, for instance a formal twinning agreement.

Other arrangements in response to requests from external organisations to fly flags or events requiring expressions of sympathy and support, such as books of condolence, will be discussed on a case by case basis and agreed by the City / Deputy City Mayor, the Chief Operating Officer and the Director of Communications, Delivery and Political Governance.

How to Fly Flags

These rules apply only to vertical flagpoles. They do not apply to canted flagpoles which are regarded as a means of decoration.

On the days appointed for the flying of flags, other than the Union Flag and City Flag, they are flown from 8.00 a.m. until sunset. Flags may be flown after sunset only when on special occasions they are to be floodlit as part of a scheme of decoration.

One flag only may be flown on any one flagstaff.

Flags at Half Mast

Flags are flown half-mast (i.e. two-thirds up between the top and bottom of the flagstaff) on the following occasions:

- from the announcement of the death up to the funeral of the Sovereign, except on Proclamation Day, when flags are hoisted right up from 11:00 to sunset;
- the funeral of members of the royal family*;
- the funeral of foreign rulers*;
- the funeral of prime ministers and ex-prime ministers of the UK*;
- other occasions by special command of The Queen.

(subject to special commands from The Queen in each case)*

On occasions when days for flying flags coincide with days for flying flags at half-mast, the following rules are observed:

Flags are flown:

- even though a member of the royal family (or a near relative of the royal family), may be lying dead, unless special commands are received from the Queen to the contrary;
- even though it may be the day of the funeral of a foreign ruler

In no circumstances may any flag be flown in a superior position to the Union Flag. The superior position is defined as follows:

- The highest flagpole;
- The centre flagpole when a number of poles are of the same height;
- The left-centre pole when the number of poles is even, when viewed from a position facing the building;
- When two flagpoles are of the same height, the Union Flag should be flown on the left hand side when viewed from a position facing the building.

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