

FLAGS PROTOCOL – QUICK REFERENCE

Only the Governor has the authority to lower flags to half-staff at State facilities. That authority is established in U.S. code and is very specific in national matters but offers discretion when events occur within the State. Traditionally, governors have taken a conservative approach to granting the honor as each display of mourning sets precedent and frequent displays ultimately diminish the significance of the act. The charts and past practice examples below are meant to aid in decision making. If in doubt, please consult the complete flag protocol document (WEB LINK).

The Governor’s directive should be communicated to the Department of Buildings and General Services for distribution to roy.seckington@vermont.gov or 802-828-6974 or the Commissioner’s Office at 802-828-3519

Governor’s Authority and Past Practice

Death of Vermont Official (Current or Former)	VT Flag	US Flag	AUTHORITY	Duration
Governor	Yes	Yes	US Code	A
Lt. Governor	Yes	Yes	US Code	A
Treasurer	Yes	Yes	US Code	A
Secretary of State	Yes	Yes	US Code	A
State Auditor	Yes	Yes	US Code	A
Congressman, former	Yes	Yes	US Code	A
First Responder – killed in line of duty	Yes	Yes	US Code	A
Member of Armed Forces – serving on active duty	Yes	Yes	US Code	A
Former Governor	Yes	Yes	Past Practice	A
Speaker of the House	Yes	Yes	Past Practice	A
President Pro Tempore	Yes	Yes	Past Practice	A
Adjutant General	Yes	Yes	Past Practice	A
State Employee – if killed in line of duty	Yes	No	Past Practice	A
Other Tragic VT Events, e.g., Harwood students	Yes	No	Past Practice	A
State Senator or Representative	Yes	No	Past Practice	B
Government official (e.g. Commissioner/Secretary)	Yes	No	Past Practice	C

Action & Duration of Flags to Half-Staff

A	Immediately on day of notice to sunrise on 4 th day (half-staff for 3 days)
B	Vermont Flag only flown at State facilities Vermont Flag flown at State House and certificate given to family Note: for one day, on the day of service
C	Action at the discretion of the Governor

Annual Notifications

Date	Full/Half-Staff	Occasion	Authority
May 15	Half	Peace Officers Memorial Day*	U.S. Code
May – 3 rd Saturday	Full	Armed Forces Day	U.S. Code
May – Last Monday	Half	Memorial Day	U.S. Code
September 11	Half	Patriots Day	Presidential Proclamation
October – 1st Sunday	Half	National Firefighters Memorial Service	Presidential Proclamation
November 11	Full	Veterans Day	U.S. Code
December 7	Half	Pearl Harbor Day	Presidential Proclamation

*Not if it occurs on the same day as Armed Forces Day.

Note: If any additional flags such as Honor and Remember or the Bennington Battle Flag are flown, they would also be lowered.

Other Annual Commemoration Dates

Date	Occasion	Authority	Action
January 15	Vermont's Independence	VT Statute	Green Mountain Boys Flag Flown
August 15, 16, 17	Battle of Bennington Day	VT Statute	Bennington Battle Flag Flown

U.S. Code and Presidential Proclamations—Death of National Dignitaries

US Flags & State Flags Are Lowered to Half-Staff - Defined in U.S. Code

Death of Government Dignitaries	DURATION
President or former president	30 days from death
Vice President	10 days from death
Chief Justice or retired Chief Justice of the U.S.	10 days from death
Speaker of the House of Representatives	10 days from death
Associate Justice of the Supreme Court	Day of death until interment
Secretary of an executive or military department	Day of death until interment
Former Vice President	Day of death until interment

Past Practice Examples

Note: First Responders – we have lowered the flag for two firefighters killed in the line of duty – one killed in VT, one from VT killed fighting with national force.

Governor's Authority – State Flag

- Can lower the State Flag at his discretion.
- Can have State flag flown at State House and presented to family.
 - Has been done on the day of services.
 - Newport ceremony recognizing 100th anniversary of police officer killed in the line of duty.
 - See protocol for this via BGS Commissioner's Office.

Former Governor

- Governor Hoff (day of services for 3 days).

Former Lt. Governor

- Barbara Snelling (day of services for 3 days).

Former Chief Justice

- Frederick W. Allen (day of service for 3 days).

Speaker of the House:

- Tim O'Connor (day of service for 3 days).

State Representative or Senator:

- Jim Condon – Lowered flag and presented to the family on 10/12/18. Not previous practice.
- Rep. Sam Lloyd – no action.

- Former Auditor Flanagan – not lowered – lived in Maine, no notice of services.
- Stafford – flag flown at SH on day of funeral.

Government Official, e.g., Commissioner/Secretary:

- Con Hogan – no action taken.

State Employee killed in line of duty:

- Social worker and State trooper.
- Not for two State employees who were murdered (not in the line of duty).

Governor's Discretion

- **How long the flag flies at half-staff**
 - Day of notification of death only (to sunrise the next day).
 - Day of reported death for 3 days.
 - Day of death to services – will there be services? How soon?
 - Day of services only – someone needs to be notified of day of services.
 - Day of services for 3 days.

Past Inconsistencies

- A state trooper – not line of duty.
- 7 US Navy Sailors on USS Fitzgerald.
- Police Officers Killed in TX – 3 days following notice of deaths.
- Harwood Students – 3 days on Monday, following Saturday deaths.