

Ask the Chief.....

Today is Peace Officers' Memorial Day and I know the flag should be flown at half-mast. However, my flag is flown from the pillar on my front porch and cannot be lowered on its pole. What should I do on days such as today?

An excellent question! Many people have unmovable an United States flag on their porch, and certainly you see them inside positioned on metal bases in government buildings and in schools. Thus such flags cannot be lowered.

The accepted practice in such cases is to attach a black mourning ribbon/streamer to the top of the flag. The black ribbon is usually about 3 inches wide, and some are as long 5-10' depending on the placement of the flag. The streamer is attached to the flag for the entire day when other flags are at half-mast.

"Half-Staff" days are designated as: Peace Officers Memorial Day (May 15th), Memorial Day (Last Monday in June), Patriot Day (September 11th), Pearl Harbor Day (December 7th), and on any occasion proclaimed by the President of the United States.

Just as a note, often people with very good intentions place the flag at half-mast to honor various fallen heroes or local dignitaries. While well intentioned it is generally accepted that outside of the 4 designated days listed above, it is only the President of the United States who can order the United States flag to be flown at half-mast. According to the flag code "by order of the President, the flag shall be flown at half-staff upon the death of principal figures of the United States Government and the Governor of a State, territory, or possession, as a mark of respect to their memory. In the event of the death of other officials or foreign dignitaries, the flag is to be displayed at half-staff according to Presidential orders, or in accordance with recognized customs or practices not inconsistent with law."

<http://www.usflag.org/nff.half.staff.html>

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