

Corporate Policy C-A-027

Policy Category	Name of Policy
Administrative	Flag Raising and Niagara Sign Lighting Policy

Policy Owner	Office of the Regional Clerk
Approval Body	Regional Council
Approval Date	June 27, 2024
Effective Date	June 28, 2024
Review by Date	July 1, 2026

1. Policy

Niagara Region recognizes that flags are important symbols of honour and pride and must be treated in a respectful and consistent manner.

The Region supports lowering flags to half-mast as a symbol of collective mourning or commemoration.

To celebrate together the strength of Niagara Region's diversity and inclusivity, the Region offers the opportunity for the raising of Community Flags on the Region's designated Community Flag poles, and lighting of the Niagara sign, to enhance awareness and acknowledge special occasions and activities within the Region.

This policy establishes a consistent protocol for the flying of flags and half-masting at Regional properties and facilities, as well as the framework to govern requests for community flag raisings and the lighting of the Niagara sign.

2. Procedure

2.1. Displaying Flags

- The Region will follow the Order of Precedence and National Flag of Canada etiquette established by Canadian Heritage when flying flags
- Flags must be in good condition
- The Regional flag takes precedence over all charitable and non-profit organization and community flags unless otherwise established by the Canadian Heritage.

- The following flags will be permanently flown:
 - The National Flag of Canada
 - Province of Ontario flag
 - The Niagara Region flag
 - The 12 flags of Niagara's local area municipalities

2.2. Half-Masting

- Flags at Niagara Region Headquarters shall be lowered to half-mast as a symbolic expression of collective mourning.
- Half-masting will occur from time of notification of death until the end of the day of the funeral, or as determined by the Clerk, for:
 - The Sovereign or a member of the Sovereign's immediate family
 - The Governor General of Canada or a former Governor General
 - The Prime Minister of Canada or a former Prime Minister
 - The Lieutenant Governor of Ontario
 - The Premier of Ontario
 - A local Member of Parliament or local Member of Provincial Parliament
 - A member of Niagara Regional Council or a former member of Niagara Regional Council
 - A current Niagara Region employee
- Half-masting will occur on the following special days:
 - April 28, Day of Mourning for Persons Killed or Injured in the Workplace
 - June 23, National Day of Remembrance for Victims of Terrorism
 - Second Sunday in September, Firefighters' National Memorial Day
 - Last Sunday in September, Police and Peace Officers' National Memorial Day
 - September 30, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation
 - November 11, Remembrance Day
 - December 6, National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women
- If flags are already lowered to half-mast, then flags may be lowered on the next business day.
- Half-masting for special circumstances not specifically identified in this section may occur at the discretion of the Office of the Regional Clerk in consultation with the CAO and the Office of the Regional Chair.

2.3. Community Flag Raising

- There will be two designated flag poles which are designated to fly flags that represent Niagara Region community organizations.
- Requests for displaying flags and flag raisings may be approved for:
 - Non-profit or charitable organizations in Niagara Region

- The occasion of an official visit from a delegation representing a foreign nation, or municipality located outside the Niagara region, as a sign of respect during the period of their visit.
- The Region will not approve flag raising requests for:
 - Organizations or groups that are political or partisan in nature, including political parties or political organizations
 - Organizations or groups that promote hatred, violence, racism, or discrimination of any kind or for flags that are deemed inappropriate or that are offensive in nature
 - Religious organizations or religious events
 - Organizations or groups that have already flown a flag on the designated Community Flag Poles within the same calendar year
 - Commercial entities
 - Corporate events
 - Organizations or groups whose mandates, programs or activities are contrary to Regional policies or by-laws
- It is the responsibility of the requesting organization or group to submit an application for a community flag raising within 30 days of the requested flag raising date but not more than 12 months in advance.
- Only one request per organization, per calendar year will be permitted.
- Requests and approvals for the use of the community flag poles will be considered on a first come, first served basis.
- Requester must provide a flag in good condition if their flag raising request is approved, along with any other information pertaining to their flag raising program, in advance of the flag raising.
- Flags will not be raised or lowered outside regular business hours.
- Niagara Region accepts no responsibility for the safekeeping or good condition of a community flag.
- When there is no community flag to be flown, the poles will remain vacant.
- Should the flags at Regional Headquarters be lowered to half-mast for mourning, the community flags will also be lowered.
- The Office of the Regional Clerk, in consultation with the Office of the Regional Chair, may apply discretion to approve or deny a request for a flag raising and reserves the right to cancel a flag raising as necessary.

2.4. Maintenance and Disposal Flags

- When a flag becomes worn, noticeably faded or otherwise unfit for display, it must be disposed of in a dignified manner
- Maintenance and disposal of flags at the Region will be done in accordance with the National Flag of Canada etiquette.

2.5. Lighting Requests for the Niagara Sign

- Requests for the lighting of the Niagara sign will be considered in accordance with the provisions regarding flag raising requests and may be approved for:
 - Non-profit or charitable organizations or community groups in Niagara Region
- The Region will not approve lighting requests for:
 - Organizations or groups that are political or partisan in nature, including political parties
 - Organizations or groups that promote hatred, violence, racism, or discrimination of any kind
 - Religious organizations or religious events
 - Commercial entities
 - Corporate events
 - Organizations or groups whose mandates, programs or activities are contrary to Regional policies or by-laws
- Other than where specifically outlined in this criteria, lighting for any specific organization, group, cause, event or commemoration will only take place once per calendar year
- It is the responsibility of the requesting organization to submit an application for the lighting of the Niagara sign within 30 days of the requested lighting date but not more than 12 months in advance.
- Requests and approvals for the lighting of the sign will be considered on a first come, first served basis.
- Requester must provide information pertaining to their request in advance of the lighting.
- The Office of the Regional Clerk, in consultation with the Office of the Regional Chair, may apply discretion to approve or deny a lighting request and reserves the right to cancel a lighting request as necessary.

3. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the following:

- All flags at Regional properties are displayed in a consistent and appropriate manner
- Community flag and lighting requests are properly administered.

4. Scope

This policy applies to the following:

- The display, maintenance, and disposal of flags flown at Regional properties
- Community flag and lighting requests

4.1. Roles and Responsibilities

1. Office of the Regional Clerk

- a. Interprets and administers this Policy.
- b. Processes and approves flag and lighting requests in consultation with the Office of the Regional Chair.
- c. Provides advice to the Office of the Regional Chair on flag raising protocols, half-masting protocols, community flag raising and lighting protocols, or other flag and lighting requests not identified in this Policy.
- d. Notifies Facilities Management to administer approved flag and lighting requests, as well as the half-masting of flags upon the notification of a death.
- e. Notifies Strategic Communications and Public Affairs when a flag is half-mast, when a community flag is raised, or when a lighting request is administered for internal and external communication purposes.

2. Facilities Management

- a. Facilities Management is responsible for half-masting flags, administering community flag requests, and lighting requests that have been approved.
- b. Responsible for the maintenance, replacement and disposal of flags.
- c. Consulting with the Office of the Regional Clerk when planning to add or remove flags or flagpoles at Regional facilities.

3. Strategic Communications and Public Affairs

- a. Provide internal and external communication when a flag is half-masted, when a community flag is raised, and when a lighting request is administered.

4. Departments

- a. It is the responsibility of the appropriate department to notify the Office of the Regional Clerk of any death, which should be accorded notice by half-masting flags.

5. References and Related Documents

5.1. Legislation, By-Laws and/or Directives

- National Flag of Canada etiquette:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/canadianheritage/services/flag-canada-etiquette.html>

5.2. Corresponding Corporate Procedure(s)

- Not Applicable

6. Related Corporate Policies

- Not Applicable

7. Document Control

The electronic version of this document is recognized as the only valid version.

Approval History

Approver(s)	Approved Date	Effective Date
Regional Council	June 25, 2020	July 1, 2020
Regional Council	June 27, 2024	June 28, 2024

Revision History

Revision No.	Date	Summary of Change(s)	Changed by
1	June 27, 2024	Amendments were made to the policy to remove the option to fly nation flags, include language that specifies community flag raising and lighting, provide additional clarity around community requests, and improve language that stipulates sign lighting requests will be reviewed using the same criteria as flag raising requests	Office of the Regional Clerk