

American Flag Etiquette

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The National Flag Conference drafted and adopted the National Flag Code on June 14, 1923. A few minor changes were made in 1924 but not until June 22, 1942 did Congress pass a

joint resolution which was amended on December 22, 1942 to become Public Law 829; Chapter 806, 77th Congress, 2nd session. Exact rules for use and display of the flag (36 U.S.C. 173-178) as well as associated sections (36 U.S.C. 171) Conduct during Playing of the National Anthem, (36 U.S.C. 172) the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, and Manner of Delivery were included. This code is the guide for all handling and display of the Stars and Stripes. It does not impose penalties for misuse of the United States Flag.

The Flag Code may be fairly tested: 'No disrespect should be shown to the Flag of the United States of America.' Therefore, actions not specifically included in the Code may be deemed acceptable as long as proper respect is shown. The following are a few of the covered guidelines.

- The flag should be lighted at all times, either by sunlight or by an appropriate light source.
- The flag should be flown in fair weather, unless the flag is designed for inclement weather use.
- The flag should never be dipped to any person or thing. It is flown upside down only as a distress signal.
- The flag should never be used for any advertising purpose.
- The flag should not be used as part of a costume or athletic uniform, except that a flag patch may be used on the uniform of military personnel, fireman, policeman and members of patriotic organizations.
- The flag should never have any mark, insignia, letter, word, number, figure or drawing or any kind placed on it or attached to it.
- The flag should never be used for receiving, holding, carrying or delivering anything.
- When the flag is lowered, no part of it should touch the ground or any other object; it should be received by waiting hands and arms. To store the flag it should be folded neatly and ceremoniously.
- The flag should be cleaned and mended when necessary.
- When a flag is so worn it is no longer fit to serve as a symbol of our country,

it should be destroyed by burning in a dignified manner. The American Legion or Boy Scouts regularly have ceremonies to properly dispose of worn flags.

So you might ask, what does this have to do with motorcyclists? Lots of us express our allegiance by displaying the American flag on our bikes or clothes. The section in the Code regarding "No disrespect should be shown to the Flag of the United States of America" pretty much says it all.

Fly it proudly everyday and especially on July 4th, the date of our great nation's independence.

See you on the road,
Denise