

# What So Proudly We Hail

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- Always remember, when you're putting it up, the stars are up and to the observer's left whether it's hung vertically or horizontally.
- Keep it in good condition; don't let it get tattered.

Other key points are presented in Section 6 of the U.S. Flag Code, which was signed into law by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1942:

"It is the universal custom to display the flag only from sunrise to sunset on buildings and on stationary flag staffs in the open. However, when a patriotic effect is desired, the flag may be displayed twenty-four hours a day if properly illuminated during the hours of darkness."

Additionally, "the flag should not be displayed on days when the weather is inclement, except when an all-weather flag is displayed."

### Flag Maintenance and Disposal

American flags displayed outdoors may be soiled by air pollutants and even damaged by mildew if stored away when wet. They also fade quickly from their constant exposure to the California sun, and fray frequently from being whipped about on windy days.

While some may be washed with mild detergent, many must be dry cleaned – a process which also appears to preserve Old Glory's deep reds and blues longer. Torn flags should be mended promptly by cutting off the damaged segment and re-hemming. Those that cannot be cleaned or fixed should be retired and replaced.

The correct way to do this, says Murphy, is through a formal ceremony that involves burning. While Lamorinda residents can technically do this on their own because the code stipulates only that worn or soiled flags "should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning," Murphy suggests that residents instead contact the VFW, which collects and stores flags in partnership with local Boy Scout troop 224 until a proper retirement service can be held.

*MOFD firefighters Adam Thornton (left) and Jacob Airola take down the flag at Station 45 before sunset.*

*Photos Ohlen Alexander*