



An Bhratach Náisiúnta

The National Flag



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The History of The Flag

The Irish Tricolour is intended to symbolise the inclusion and hoped-for union of the people of different traditions on this island, which is now expressed in the Constitution as the entitlement of every person born in Ireland to be part of the Irish nation (regardless of ethnic origin, religion or political conviction).



A green flag with harp was an older symbol of the nation, going back at least to Confederate Ireland and Owen Roe O'Neill in the 1640s, and was subsequently widely adopted by the Irish Volunteers and especially the United Irishmen (Figure A). A rival organisation, the Orange Order, whose main strength was in the North, and which was exclusively Protestant, was founded in 1795 in memory of King William of Orange and the 'glorious revolution' of 1689.

FIGURE A

Following the 1798 Rebellion which pitted orange against green, the ideal of a later Nationalist generation in the mid-nineteenth century was to make peace between them and, if possible, to found a self-governing Ireland on such peace and union.

Irish tricolours were mentioned in 1830 and 1844, but widespread recognition was not accorded the flag until 1848. From March of that year Irish tricolours appeared side by side with French ones at meetings held all over the country to celebrate the revolution that had just taken place in France. In April, Thomas Francis Meagher, the Young Ireland leader, brought a tricolour of orange, white and green from Paris and presented it to a Dublin meeting. John Mitchel, referring to it, said: 'I hope to see that flag one day waving, as our national banner'.

Although the tricolour was not forgotten as a symbol of hoped-for union and a banner associated with the Young Irelanders and revolution, it was little used between 1848 and 1916. Even up to the eve of the Rising in 1916, the green flag held undisputed sway.

Neither the colours nor the arrangement of these early tricolours were standardised. All of the 1848 tricolours showed green, white and orange, but orange was sometimes put next to the staff, and in at least one flag the order was orange, green and white. In 1850 a flag of green for the Catholics, orange for the Protestants of the Established Church and blue for the Presbyterians was proposed. In 1883 a Parnellite tricolour of yellow, white and green, arranged horizontally, is recorded.

Down to modern times yellow has occasionally been used instead of orange, but by this substitution the fundamental symbolism is destroyed.

Associated with separatism in the past, flown during the Rising of 1916 and capturing the national imagination as the banner of the new revolutionary Ireland, the tricolour came to be acclaimed throughout the country as the National Flag. It continued to be used officially during the period 1922- 1937, and in the latter year its position as the National Flag was formally confirmed by the new Constitution, Article 7 of which states: 'The national flag is the tricolour of green, white and orange'.



Guidelines for use of the National Flag

The following guidelines are to assist persons in giving due respect to the National Flag. Observance of the guidelines contained in this booklet is a matter for each individual because there are no statutory requirements. It is expected, however, that the National Flag will be treated at all times with appropriate respect by those who use it.

The Department of the Taoiseach has general responsibility in relation to the National Flag. This responsibility is primarily concerned with the protocol for the flying of the flag. The Department's role, therefore, is an advisory one.

Design



Proportion = 2:1

Each colour = $\frac{1}{3}$ of width

Colours:

Green = PMS 347

White

Orange = PMS 151

1 The National Flag is rectangular in shape, the width being twice its depth. The three colours – green, white and orange – are of equal size, and vertically disposed. Often different shades of yellow, instead of orange, are seen at civilian functions. This misrepresentation of the National Flag should be actively discouraged. The Flag should normally be displayed on a staff, the green being next to the staff, the white in the middle and the orange farthest from the staff.

Technical data:

Pantone Matching System colours:

Green 347, Orange 151.

2 Provided that the correct proportions are observed, the Flag may be made to any convenient size.



Display, placing and precedence

3 No flag or pennant should be flown above the National Flag.



4 When the National Flag is carried with another flag, or flags, it should be carried in the place of honour, i.e. on the marching right – or on the left of an observer towards whom the flags are approaching (Figure B).

Where one of these flags is that of the European Union, the European Union flag should be carried on the immediate left of the National Flag, or, as seen by an observer when the flags are approaching, on the immediate right of the National Flag.

Figure B



5 In the event of a display of crossed staffs the National Flag should be to the right and to the fore, that is to the left of the observer who is facing the flag. Its staff should be in front of the other flag or flags (Figure C).

Figure C

6(a) European Union Flags

When the group of flags of the European Union are flown, the sequence is alphabetical, based on the first letter of the country's name. The flags should be flown from left to right with the European Union flag flown from the first flagstaff before the group (Figure D). An alternative order of flags is to begin on the left with the National flag and place the European Union flag on the far right of the group, as seen by an observer (Figure E).



Figure D



Figure E

6(b) International Flags

Where either an even or an odd number of flags are flown in line on staffs of equal height, the National Flag should be first on the right of the line (i.e. on the observer's left as he or she faces the flags). Where one of these flags is that of the European Union, the European Union flag should be flown on the immediate left of the National Flag, or as seen by an observer, on the immediate right of the National Flag. Where, however, an odd number of flags are displayed from staffs grouped so that there is one staff in the centre and higher than the others, the National Flag should be displayed from the staff so placed. Where one of these flags is that of the European Union, the European Union flag should be flown from the first flagstaff on the right, or as seen by an observer, on the first flagstaff on the left.

7 Only one National Flag should be displayed in each group of flags or at each location. In all cases, the National Flag should be in the place of honour.

8 When the National Flag is displayed either horizontally or vertically against a wall or other background, the green should be on the right (an observer's left) in the horizontal position or uppermost in the vertical position.

9 When displayed on a platform the National Flag should be above and behind the speaker's desk.

10 While being carried the National Flag should not be dipped by way of salute or compliment except to the dead during memorial ceremonies.



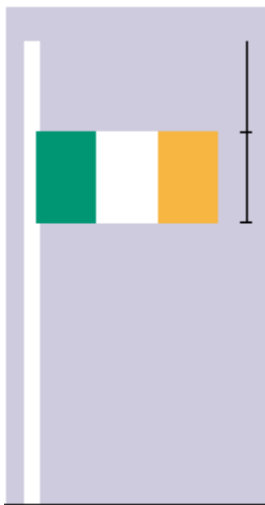
Hoisting and lowering the Flag

11 In raising or lowering, the National Flag should not be allowed to touch the ground. When being hoisted to half-mast, the Flag should first be brought to the peak of the staff and then lowered to the half-mast position. It should again be brought to the peak of the staff before it is finally lowered (Figure F).

Figure F

Saluting the Flag

12 On ceremonial occasions when the National Flag is being hoisted or lowered, or when it is passing by in a parade, all present should face it, stand to attention and salute. Persons in uniform who normally salute with the hand should give the hand salute. Persons in civilian attire should salute by standing to attention. The salute to the Flag when it is being borne past in a parade is rendered when the Flag is six paces away and the salute is held until the Flag has passed by. Where more than one National Flag is carried, the salute should be given only to the leading Flag.



Note: a flag is at half-mast in any position below the top of the staff but never below the middle point of the staff. As a general guide, the half-mast position may be taken as that where the top of the flag is the depth of the flag below the top of the staff.

FIGURE F

When the National Anthem is played in the presence of the National Flag, all present should face the National Flag, stand to attention and salute it, remaining at the salute until the last note of the music.

Worn-out Flag

13 When the National Flag has become worn or frayed it is no longer fit for display, and should not be used in any manner implying disrespect.

Respect for the National Flag

14 The National Flag when used as a decoration should always be treated with due respect. It may be used as a discreet lapel button or rosette or as part of a centerpiece for a table. When used in the latter context with the flags of other nations, the National Flag should also be displayed in the place of honour on a nearby flag staff. Where multiple National Flags are flown on festive occasions these should be of uniform dimensions. Bunting of the National Colours may also be used on festive occasions.

15 The National Flag should be displayed in the open only between sunrise and sunset, except on the occasion of public meetings, processions, or funerals, when it may be displayed for the duration of such functions (Figure G).



Note: For military purposes, sunrise and sunset are deemed to be:

Sunrise:	
March to October	08:00 Hours
November to February	08:30 Hours
Sunset:	
January and December	15:30 Hours
February and November	16:30 Hours
March and October	17:30 Hours
April	18:00 Hours
May and September	19:00 Hours
June to August	20:00 Hours

Figure G

Practices to avoid



16 When displayed on a platform, the National Flag should not be used to cover the speaker's desk, nor should it be draped over the platform.

17 The National Flag should **never** be defaced by placing slogans, logos, lettering or pictures of any kind on it, for example at sporting events.

18 The National Flag should not be draped on cars, trains, boats or other modes of transport; it should not be carried flat, but should always be carried aloft and free, except when used to drape a coffin; on such an occasion, the green should be at the head of the coffin (Figure H).

Figure H

19 Care should be taken at all times to ensure that the National Flag does not touch the ground, trail in water or become entangled in trees or other obstacles.

Occasions on which the National Flag is flown



20 It is the normal practice to fly the National Flag daily at all military posts and from a limited number of important State buildings (Figure I).

The National Flag is also flown on St Patrick's Day (the National Holiday), Easter Sunday and Easter Monday (in commemoration of the Rising of 1916), and the National Day of Commemoration on the Sunday closest to 11 July (the date of the Anglo-Irish Truce in 1921).

On these occasions the National Flag is flown from all State buildings throughout the country which are equipped with flagpoles, and many private individuals and concerns also fly it.

21 The National Flag is flown on the occasion of other significant national and local events such as festivals and commemorations.

Figure I

22 The National Flag is frequently flown at half-mast on the death of a national or international figure on all prominent government buildings equipped with a flag pole. The death of a prominent local figure may be marked locally by the National Flag being flown at half-mast.

23 Where the National Flag is flown at half-mast no other flag should be half-masted.

Further advice may be had from

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This booklet is available on the Government website.

ISBN 0-7-76-9101-X