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## **Flag Usage Policy**

### **POLICY**

The Flag Usage Policy ensures that flags flown at all North Island College (NIC) properties are displayed in a consistent and respectful manner as required by the provincial and federal governments.

### **PURPOSE**

This policy designates the authority over flags and the manner in which they will be displayed at NIC properties.

### **SCOPE AND APPLICATION**

The manner in which flags are displayed in Canada is governed by established practice from the provincial and federal governments. This policy applies to all flags raised and lowered on NIC properties. This policy and the related procedures are in accordance with the Rules for Flying the National Flag of Canada as outlined by the Government of Canada and the Province of BC's website on Flag Protocol.

### **PRINCIPLES**

1. NIC follows national and provincial protocols with respect to flying flags. NIC recognizes the flying of flags as an important way to communicate with internal and external audiences.
2. Flying flags at the half-mast position is a sign of respect and mourning for an individual or group or to mark a special day.
3. The (BC government's) Office of Protocol administers the policy for flying flags at half-mast. All government buildings in B.C., including the Legislative building and all other public sector buildings, must follow the half-masting rules. These rules serve as a guideline for any other building or residence in the province that flies a provincial flag.
4. NIC will follow both provincial and national standards on flag usage with the understanding that the standards may incorporate the use of newly created commemorative flags.
5. NIC will follow the guidelines and procedures found in Appendix A for all flag usage that is

discretionary and in addition to provincial and federal requirements.

## DEFINITIONS

**National Flag:** The National Flag of Canada as approved by Parliament and proclaimed by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Canada, on February 15, 1965.

**Provincial Flag:** Adopted in 1960, the provincial flag duplicates the design of B.C.'s Shield of Arms, which is a component of B.C.'s Coat of Arms.

**Half-mast:** Flying flags at the half-mast position is a sign of respect and mourning for an individual or to mark a special day. The position of the flag when flying at half-mast depends on its size, the length of the flagstaff and its location. Half-mast generally means the position of the flag is exactly half-way down the flagpole.

**Special, Commemorative or Awareness Flags:** The President of North Island College may deem it appropriate to honour days of particular significance to the College and its students by displaying a special, commemorative or awareness flag. Below are examples of special flags that may be flown at NIC. This is not an exhaustive list, and other flags may be added at the discretion of the President:

1. **The rainbow flag**, commonly known as the gay pride flag or LGBTQ2S+ pride flag, will be flown at NIC campuses on Gay Pride Days and/or in alignment with other local community events.
2. **Gelgapotla** – “Standing together in support of each other”, also known as the Canadian Native Flag – was designed by Kwakwaka'wakw artist Curtis Wilson. It will be flown during National Indigenous History Month in June. Flag raising ceremonies may be held during National Indigenous Peoples Day (June 21) at NIC campuses or in alignment with other community events.
3. **The Sovereign's personal Canadian flag** or standards (a type of flag used for personal identification) of the Royal Family shall fly day and night during a visit to NIC campuses by Royalty.
4. The flag of a major, externally sponsored event taking place on the campus, and in which the College is a partner.

## GUIDELINES

### Result of a Death

Flags may be flown at half-mast after the passing of a member of the NIC community as a gesture of respect and mourning for a period of time determined by the President. In general, flags shall be lowered to half-mast as soon as possible after receiving permission from next of kin until the evening the following day.

Flags may be flown at half-mast to mark the death of the following members of the college community:

1. Current NIC students
2. Current NIC employees
3. Current serving members of the NIC Board of Governors or the NIC Foundation Board
4. Past presidents
5. Retired college employees, when a memorial service is held on campus

**LEGISLATIVE REFERENCES:**

BC Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA)  
BC Half-Masting Policy  
BC Government Flag Protocol  
Government of Canada - The History of the National Flag of Canada

**LINKS AND RELATED POLICIES, DOCUMENTS AND WEBSITES:**

Field School Faculty Lead Handbook (International Education)  
NIC Adventure Guiding Program: Emergency Procedures for Field Activities (off-campus)  
Risk Assessment and Prevention Team – RAPT Terms of Reference  
Student Case Management Team – SCMT Terms of Reference  
Response to the Death of a Student Protocol

**CROSS REFERENCE:**

NIC Policy #1-01 Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy  
NIC Policy #1-20 Code of Ethical Conduct  
NIC Policy #2-08 Human Rights – Discrimination and Harassment  
NIC Policy #2-10 Protection of Employees from Violence in the Workplace  
NIC Policy #2-11 Emergency Response to Inappropriate, Disruptive, or Threatening Behaviour  
NIC Policy #2-15 Occupational Health & Safety  
NIC Policy #3-34 Sexual Violence and Misconduct  
North Island College Emergency Operations Policy (in development)

*Policies and Procedures Manual*

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**APPENDIX A – Flag Usage Policy  
Flag Usage Procedures**

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**OVERVIEW**

NIC receives email notifications from the BC government’s Office of Protocol about when a flag should be lowered to half-mast and for what duration. The Vice President Strategic Initiatives (VPSI) (or delegate) will forward relevant emails to NIC’s Director of Facilities, who will action the directive accordingly. The VPSI will also forward the email to the Director of Marketing and Communications, who will post a Half-Masting Notice to the NIC website.

Whenever a special, commemorative or awareness flag is flown, the Director of Marketing and Communications will post a notice in the events section of the NIC website in order to inform the college community.

**RESULT OF A DEATH**

The President of NIC does have some discretion in regards to internal circumstances which may result in flags being lowered to half-mast, such as the death of a member of the NIC community.

**Communications**

In the event of the death of an NIC student, employee, or member of the NIC community, certain procedures must be followed to ensure the College’s response is compassionate and respectful, and that accurate information is released in a timely fashion. In the event of a student death, the Flag Usage Policy and procedures will be enacted in conjunction with the Response to the Death of a Student Protocol, which states:

1. NIC will demonstrate respect for the family of the deceased student by adhering to the family’s wishes in terms of the information disclosed to the College community.
2. NIC will only disclose information in compliance with all relevant legislation including the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA) and NIC Policy #1-01 Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy. Where there is a conflict between these Procedures and FOIPPA, the legislation will govern.

**Internal Communications**

Upon notification from NIC’s Critical Response Team about the death of a student, employee or other NIC community member – in which the Next of Kin have given permission to communicate information – the VPSI (or delegate) will work with the Critical Response Team to craft a message to be shared with the NIC community via an all users email sent from the President. Whenever possible, the email will be sent the day before flags are lowered to half-mast. The Director, Marketing & Communications will also post a Half-Masting Notice to the NIC website. The VPSI (or delegate) will contact NIC’s Director, Facilities Management, who will have the flags lowered to half-mast.

**WHEN NOT TO HALF-MAST FLAGS**

1. NIC will respect the wishes from Next of Kin who request privacy following the death of a loved one and will not lower flags to half-mast.
2. If the flags are half-masted, they must nonetheless be flown at full-mast on the following legal holidays: Victoria Day and Canada Day.

**WHEN TO HALF-MAST FLAGS**

1. Flags will be flown at half-mast at all provincial government buildings, Crown corporations and agencies, courts and institutions in British Columbia on the following special days and in the case of the death of certain people, as indicated below:

Special Days	Location/Duration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• April 9 – Vimy Ridge Day (at Legislature only)</li> <li>• April 28 – Workers’ Mourning Day</li> <li>• June 23 – National Day of Remembrance for Victims of Terrorism</li> <li>• Second Sunday in September– Firefighters’ National Memorial Day</li> <li>• Last Sunday in September – Police and Peace Officers’ National Memorial Day</li> <li>• November 11 – Remembrance Day</li> <li>• December 6 – National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women</li> </ul>	<p><b>Location:</b> within the Province of British Columbia on all Provincial Government Buildings, including the Legislative Building</p> <p><b>Duration:</b> from sunrise to sunset on the designated day. Same for Police and Peace Officer’s National Memorial Day and Remembrance Day unless half-masting occurs near cenotaph or place where remembrance or memorial is being observed, then half-masting can occur at 11 am or according to the prescribed order of service, until sunset.</p> <p><b>Discretion:</b> no</p> <p><b>Initiated by:</b> the Federal Government</p>

2. The BC government’s Office of Protocol will email NIC if it is required to lower flags to half-mast to mark the death of national and provincial figures, such as:
  - a. The Sovereign, the Governor General and the Prime Minister
  - b. The Sovereign’s family
  - c. Former Governor Generals
  - d. Former Prime Ministers
  - e. Current Members of Parliament (MPs), Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) or Mayors of a community served by North Island College, on the campus located in the community served.
3. Flags shall be lowered to join in national mourning, if the Government of Canada orders flags lowered on federal buildings throughout Canada. BC’s Office of Protocol will email NIC if this is required.
4. Flags will be lowered to half-mast on exceptional circumstances as deemed appropriate by the President of the College as outlined in the Flag Usage Policy and this procedures document.

## FLAG USAGE

1. Only one flag shall be flown on a flagpole at a time.
2. Where only one flagpole is available, the Canadian flag will be flown. The Flag of Canada should not be displayed in a position inferior to any other flag and no other flag should fly on the same staff as the Canadian flag.
3. Where two flagpoles are available, the Canadian flag will be flown on the left (in the perspective of a facing observer) and the provincial flag on the right.
4. Where there are three flagpoles, the Canadian flag will be flown from the centre pole. The BC flag will be flown to the left and the third flag will be flown to the right. Where more than three flagpoles are present, the Canadian flag will be flown as close to the centre as possible.
5. The Canadian flag will be raised first and lowered last, unless simultaneous raising with flags is possible and appropriate.
6. Where Canadian and/or provincial flags are displayed on walls or stages, usage will be adapted from the guidelines above.
7. The BC flag may be removed from its pole -- if only two are available -- to permit the flying of other flags, such as Special, Commemorative or Awareness Flags.

## FLAG PLACEMENT

How you place flags depends on the number of flags and the ranking of each flag. The location of the position of honour depends on the number of flags flown and the chosen configuration. NIC currently has three flag poles located at the main entrance area of its Campbell River campus. The Port Alberni and Comox Valley campuses each have two flags displayed. Protocol dictates that the National Flag of Canada and the Provincial Flag of British Columbia be flown on these poles, except for special circumstances.

**One Flag:** In circumstances where only one flag can be flown, it will be Canadian flag.

**Two Flags:** “When two flags are displayed, to an observer facing the flags, the position of honour is on the left. For example, when Canada’s flag and B.C.’s flag are flown together, Canada’s flag is on the left and B.C.’s is on the right. In B.C., when our flag is flown with another national, provincial or state flag, B.C.’s flag holds the position of honour.”

**Three Flags:** “When three flags are displayed, the position of honour is in the centre (Canadian Flag). To an observer facing the display, the second-ranking flag (the B.C. Flag) is placed to the left of centre and the other to the right.”