

Guidance

Union Flag flying guidance for UK government buildings

Designated days when the Union Flag must be flown on UK government buildings. UK government buildings are also encouraged to fly the Union Flag all year round.

From: [Department for Culture, Media and Sport](#) (</government/organisations/department-for-culture-media-and-sport>) and [Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport](#) (</government/organisations/department-for-digital-culture-media-sport>)

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It is a symbol of national unity and pride. The first Union Flag was created in 1606 and combined the flags of England and Scotland; the present Union Flag dates from 1801.

There are designated days when the Union Flag must be flown on UK government buildings by command of His Majesty The King. However, UK government buildings are encouraged to fly the Union Flag all year around.

This guidance is aimed at UK government buildings. However, we would encourage local authorities and other local organisations to follow suit where they wish to fly flags.

Flying the Union Flag

Where UK government buildings only have one flagpole, the Union Flag should be flown every day except on certain occasions when you may wish to fly other flags, including but not limited to, the national flags of the constituent nations of the United Kingdom, the Armed Forces Day flag, the Commonwealth flag, county and other local flags, and other flags which may promote civic pride.

DCMS may issue ad-hoc guidance encouraging UK government buildings to fly such flags throughout the year, alongside the Union Flag

Where UK government buildings have more than one flagpole, and two flags are being flown, the Union Flag must always be flown in the superior position which is either:

- the highest flagpole
- the centre flagpole where there is an odd number of poles of the same height, or
- the left centre flagpole viewed from the front of the building, where there is an even number of

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In Northern Ireland, designated flag flying for Northern Ireland government buildings is governed by legislation rather than this guidance.

Designated days for flying the Union Flag on UK government buildings 2024

- **1 March:** St David's Day (in Wales)
- **11 March:** Commonwealth Day (second Monday in March)
- **17 March:** St Patrick's Day (in Northern Ireland)
- **9 April:** His Majesty The King's Wedding Anniversary
- **23 April:** St George's Day (in England)
- **6 May:** Coronation Day
- **15 June:** Official Birthday of His Majesty The King
- **21 June:** Birthday of HRH The Prince of Wales
- **17 July:** Birthday of Her Majesty The Queen
- **8 September:** His Majesty The King's Accession
- **10 November:** Remembrance Day (second Sunday in November)
- **14 November:** Birthday of His Majesty The King
- **30 November:** St Andrew's Day (in Scotland)

Also:

The day of the opening of a Session of the Houses of Parliament by His Majesty and the day of the prorogation of a Session of the Houses of Parliament by His Majesty. Flags should be flown on these days even if His Majesty does not perform

Wales and Northern Ireland, has published frequently asked questions relating to the Union Flag (<https://www.college-of-arms.gov.uk/resources/union-flag-faqs>) including how the Union flag should be flown, along with information on the College's approved designs of the Union Flag (<https://www.college-of-arms.gov.uk/resources/union-flag-approved-designs>).

In England and Wales, flags are treated as advertisements for the purposes of the planning regime, but express advertisement consent is not required to fly the Union flag from a flagpole. The government has published [a guide on the planning rules in England on flying types of flag](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flying-flags-a-plain-english-guide) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flying-flags-a-plain-english-guide>).

In Scotland, flag flying is outside the scope of the advertisement control regime.

*Note: The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2021, which came into force on 24 June 2021, allows for two flags, including at least one national flag, to be flown from the same flagpole.

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