

## **Memorandum**

**CSC-C 3-2024**

**Subject:** Flag Raising and Niagara Sign Lighting Policy

**Date:** March 6, 2024

**To:** Corporate Services Committee

**From:** Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk

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At the Corporate Services Committee meeting held on February 7, 2024, the following was an item of Other Business:

Councillor Bateman requested a memo with further information regarding the Regional Flag and Lighting Policy with respect to the requests that were not granted pertaining to Palestine.

Regional Council approved Corporate Policy C-A-027 Flag Raising and “Niagara” Sign Lighting, on June 25, 2020. With the International Plaza being able to accommodate community requests for both flag raisings and lighting of the Niagara sign, the Region required a policy to ensure requests are appropriately approved and properly administered. This policy was implemented to ensure that flags are displayed in a consistent and appropriate manner across all Regional facilities and properties and provides protocols for the displaying and half-masting of flags, as well as the framework to govern requests for community flag raisings and the lighting of the Niagara sign.

In creating the policy, a scan of comparable policies from various municipalities and universities across Ontario was completed. The scan provided an overview of best practices for inclusion in the policy and incorporated feedback from multiple internal parties including Legal, Facilities Management, Planning and Development Services, Clerks, Corporate Services, Regional Chair’s Office, as well as the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT).

This comprehensive review resulted in a policy that includes details on how flags are to be displayed across Regional facilities and properties and establishes a guideline to recognize occasions and events where a flag should be at half-mast. The policy also includes criteria for community flag and lighting requests to ensure that requests are processed fairly and in alignment with the policy provisions.

The Region offers the opportunity for the raising of Nation Flags and Community Flags on the Region's designated Community Flag poles, and lighting of the Niagara sign, to enhance awareness of special occasions and activities. When considering flag raising requests, a review of the request is undertaken to ensure adherence with the policy. Any requests received that do not meet the provisions of the policy are not actioned.

The Region follows the Order of Precedence and National Flag of Canada etiquette established by Canadian Heritage. The manner in which flags may be displayed in Canada is not governed by legislation, but rather by established practice of the Government of Canada, which the Region also observes. In accordance with this established practice, the Region only flies flags of nations recognized by the Federal Department of Global Affairs <http://international.gc.ca/world-monde/country-pays/index.aspx?lang=eng>

With respect to the requests pertaining to Palestine, as Palestine is not a nation recognized by the Federal Department of Global Affairs, the requesters were advised their requests did not meet the requirements of the policy and therefore would not be actioned.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

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Ann-Marie Norio  
Regional Clerk

Appendix 1: Corporate Policy C-A-027 Flag Raising and "Niagara" Sign Lighting

## Corporate Policy C-A-027

<b>Policy Category</b>	<b>Name of Policy</b>
Administrative	Flag Raising and Niagara Sign Lighting Policy

<b>Policy Owner</b>	Office of the Regional Clerk
<b>Approval Body</b>	Regional Council
<b>Approval Date</b>	June 25, 2020
<b>Effective Date</b>	July 1, 2020
<b>Review by Date</b>	July 1, 2022

### 1. Policy

Niagara Region recognizes that flags are important symbols of honour and pride and must be treated in a respectful and consistent manner.

The Region supports lowering flags to half-mast as a symbol of mourning or commemoration.

To celebrate together the strength of Niagara Region's diversity and inclusivity, the Region offers the opportunity for the raising of Nation Flags and Community Flags on the Region's designated Community Flag poles, and lighting of the Niagara sign, to enhance awareness of special occasions and activities.

This policy establishes a consistent protocol for the flying of flags and half-masting at Regional properties and facilities, as well as the framework to govern requests for community flag raisings and the lighting of the Niagara sign.

### 2. Procedure

#### 2.1. Displaying Flags

- The Region will follow the Order of Precedence and National Flag of Canada etiquette established by Canadian Heritage when flying flags
- Flags must be in good condition
- The Regional flag takes precedence over all charitable and non-profit organization and community flags unless otherwise established by the Canadian Heritage.

- The following flags will be permanently flown:
  - The National Flag of Canada
  - Province of Ontario flag
  - The Niagara Region flag
  - The 12 flags of Niagara's local area municipalities

## **2.2. Half-Masting**

- Flags at Niagara Region Headquarters shall be lowered to half-mast as a symbolic expression of collective mourning
- Half-masting will occur from time of notification of death until the end of the day of the funeral, or as determined by the Clerk, for:
  - The Sovereign or a member of the Sovereign's immediate family
  - The Governor General of Canada or a former Governor General
  - The Prime Minister of Canada or a former Prime Minister
  - The Lieutenant Governor of Ontario
  - The Premier of Ontario
  - A local Member of Parliament or local Member of Provincial Parliament
  - A member of Niagara Regional Council or a former member of Niagara Regional Council
  - A current Niagara Region employee
- Half-masting will occur on the following special days:
  - April 28, Day of Mourning for Persons Killed or Injured in the Workplace
  - June 23, National Day of Remembrance for Victims of Terrorism
  - Second Sunday in September, Firefighters' National Memorial Day
  - Last Sunday in September, Police and Peace Officers' National Memorial Day
  - November 11, Remembrance Day
  - December 6, National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women
- If flags are already lowered to half-mast for one reason, like a special day, then flags may be lowered on the next business day
- Half-masting for special circumstances not specifically identified in this section may occur at the discretion of the Office of the Regional Clerk in consultation with the CAO and the Office of the Regional Chair

## **2.3. Nation and Community Flag Raising**

- There will be two designated flag poles to accommodate community flag requests
- Requests for displaying flags and flag raisings may be approved for:
  - Non-profit or charitable organizations
  - Recognition of dignitary visits and delegation visits
  - Recognition of a Nation
- The Region will not approve flag raising requests for:

- Nations that are not recognized by the Government of Canada for flag raisings
- Organizations or groups that are political or partisan in nature, including political parties or political organizations
- Organizations or groups that promote hatred, violence, racism, or discrimination of any kind
- Religious organizations or religious events
- Nations and organizations or groups that have already flown a flag on the designated Community Flag Poles within the same calendar year
- Commercial entities
- Corporate events
- Organizations or groups whose mandates, programs or activities are contrary to Regional policies or by-laws
- It is the responsibility of the requesting organization or group to submit an application for a community flag raising
- Requests and approvals for the use of the community flag poles will be granted on a first come, first served basis
- Requester must provide a flag in good condition if their flag raising request is approved, along with any other information pertaining to their flag raising program, in advance of the flag raising
- The Office of the Regional Clerk, in consultation with the Office of the Regional Chair, may apply discretion to approve or deny a request for a flag raising and reserves the right to cancel a flag raising as necessary

#### **2.4. Maintenance and Disposal Flags**

- When a flag becomes worn, noticeably faded or otherwise unfit for display, it must be disposed of in a dignified manner
- Maintenance and disposal of flags at the Region will be done in accordance with the National Flag of Canada etiquette

#### **2.5. Lighting Requests for the Niagara Sign**

- Requests for the lighting of the Niagara sign may be approved for:
  - Non-profit or charitable organizations or groups
- The Region will not approve lighting requests for:
  - Organizations or groups that are political or partisan in nature, including political parties
  - Organizations or groups that promote hatred, violence, racism, or discrimination of any kind
  - Religious organizations or religious events
  - Commercial entities
  - Corporate events

- Organizations or groups whose mandates, programs or activities are contrary to Regional policies or by-laws
- Other than where specifically outlined in this criteria, lighting for any specific organization, group, cause, event or commemoration will only take place once per calendar year
- It is the responsibility of the requesting organization to submit an application for the lighting of the Niagara sign
- Requests and approvals for the lighting of the sign will be granted on a first come, first served basis
- Requester must provide information pertaining to their request in advance of the lighting
- The Office of the Regional Clerk, in consultation with the Office of the Regional Chair, may apply discretion to approve or deny a lighting request and reserves the right to cancel a lighting request as necessary

### **3. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the following:

- All flags at Regional properties are displayed in a consistent and appropriate manner
- Nation and community flag and lighting requests are properly administered

### **4. Scope**

This policy applies to the following:

- The display, maintenance, and disposal of flags flown at Regional properties
- Nation and community flag and lighting requests

#### **4.1. Roles and Responsibilities**

##### **1. Office of the Regional Clerk**

- a. Interprets and administers this Policy.
- b. Processes and approves flag and lighting requests in consultation with the Office of the Regional Chair.
- c. Provides advice to the Office of the Regional Chair on flag raising protocols, half-masting protocols, nation and community flag raising and lighting protocols, or other flag and lighting requests not identified in this Policy.
- d. Notifies Facilities Management to administer approved flag and lighting requests, as well as the half-masting of flags upon the notification of a death.

- e. Notifies Strategic Communications and Public Affairs when a flag is half-mast, when a nation or community flag is raised, or when a lighting request is administered for internal communication purposes.

## **2. Facilities Management**

- a. Facilities Management is responsible for half-masting flags, administering nation or community flag requests, and lighting requests that have been approved.
- b. Responsible for the maintenance, replacement and disposal of flags.
- c. Consult with the Office of the Regional Clerk when planning to add or remove flags or flagpoles at Regional facilities.

## **3. Strategic Communications and Public Affairs**

- a. Provide internal and external (as required) communication when a flag is half-masted, when a nation or community flag is raised, and when a lighting request is administered

## **4. Departments**

- a. It is the responsibility of the appropriate department to notify the Office of the Regional Clerk of any death, which should be accorded notice by half-masting flags.

## **4. References and Related Documents**

### **4.1. Legislation, By-Laws and/or Directives**

- National Flag of Canada etiquette:  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/canadianheritage/services/flag-canada-etiquette.html>

### **4.2. Corresponding Corporate Procedure(s)**

- Not Applicable

## **5. Related Corporate Policies**

- Not Applicable

## **6. Document Control**

The electronic version of this document is recognized as the only valid version.

**Approval History**

Approver(s)	Approved Date	Effective Date
Regional Council	June 25, 2020	July 1, 2020

**Revision History**

Revision No.	Date	Summary of Change(s)	Changed by