

# 4<sup>th</sup> of July – Independence Day

In triumph and in tragedy we stand united and defiant in the face of any who would challenge our commitment to our freedom, to our future, to our country

**FREEDOM. LIBERTY. UNITY. Wishing you a very happy Independence Day.**

## **Independence Day: A Celebration of Freedom and Unity**

Independence Day is a cherished American holiday, celebrated annually on the 4th of July in commemoration of our nation's declaration of freedom and liberty from British rule in 1776. As we gather to honor this significant milestone through the traditions of barbecues, parades, fireworks, and other festivities, we show our patriotic spirit and honor our country's history.

## **Displaying the U.S. Flag: A Symbol of Patriotism**

A quintessential symbol of American patriotism, the U.S. flag is displayed by many to honor the nation. Before you fly the red, white, and blue, here are a few guidelines from the U.S. Flag Code to ensure it is treated with the dignity it deserves.

### **Respectful Handling**

The flag should never touch anything beneath it, such as the ground, floor, or water. This rule underscores the honor and respect the flag commands.

### **Proper Orientation**

When carried, the flag should always be aloft and free, never flat or horizontal, reflecting its significance as a proud symbol of the nation.

### **Correct Placement**

When hanging vertically on a wall, window, or door, the blue field (Union) should be to the observer's left, maintaining a consistent and respectful presentation.

### **Half-staff Protocol**

On certain occasions, the flag is flown at half-staff to honor those who have served or on national days of mourning. The flag should be first hoisted to the peak before being lowered to half-staff position, and again raised to the peak before being lowered entirely at days end.

### **Honoring Retired Flags**

When a flag is no longer suited for public display, the U.S. flag code specifies that it must be retired in a dignified manner, preferably by burning. Many local VFW posts and American Legion chapters conduct ceremonies, often held on Flag Day (June 14), to respectfully retire worn or aged flags.

### **Learn More About Flag Etiquette**

Understanding and adhering to these guidelines ensures that the display of the flag remains a gesture of respect and patriotism. For those interested in further details on flag etiquette, a comprehensive online resource can be found [here](https://www.hfotusa.org/independence-day-a-celebration-of-freedom-and-unity/).

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Independence Day is a time for celebration, family gatherings, and patriotic fervor. As we come together to honor the birth of our nation, it's essential to remember that observing certain etiquette rules can make the 4th of July a more enjoyable and respectful experience for everyone. Whether hosting a party or attending one, here are some helpful tips to ensure your celebration succeeds!

### **1. RSVP Responsibly**

If you've been invited to a 4th of July event, respond to the invitation as soon as possible. This will help the host plan the party effectively and ensure enough food and seating for everyone. If your plans change, make sure to inform the host promptly. Remember, a timely response is a courteous one!

### **2. Dress Code and Theme**

Check if the party has a specific dress code or theme. Many 4th of July gatherings encourage guests to wear patriotic colors like red, white, and blue. It adds to the festive atmosphere and demonstrates your enthusiasm for the occasion. However, if there is no dress code, choose neat and appropriate attire for the venue and weather.

### **3. Punctuality Matters**

Arrive on time for the event. It's impolite to keep the host waiting, and your timely arrival allows you to participate fully in all the planned activities. If you foresee being significantly late, call ahead and let the host know.

### **4. Be Mindful of Noise**

Fireworks are integral to 4th of July celebrations, but they can be disruptive to pets, elderly neighbors, and young children. If you plan to set off fireworks, be considerate of your neighbors and their schedules. Avoid lighting them too late at night or too early in the morning. And always adhere to local laws and regulations regarding fireworks usage.

### **5. Bring a Thoughtful Host Gift**

Consider bringing a thoughtful host gift if you're attending a 4th of July party as a guest. It could be something related to the holiday, like a patriotic decoration or a delicious dessert to share with everyone. The host will cherish your gesture of appreciation.

### **6. Offer to Contribute**

If it's a potluck-style gathering, offer to bring a dish or beverage to share. This helps lighten the load for the host and ensures a variety of food for everyone's tastes.

### **7. Mind Your Table Manners**

If the party involves a meal, practice good table manners. Chew with your mouth closed, avoid talking with a full mouth, and be polite when passing dishes around the table. Also, be sure to thank the host for their efforts.

### **8. Respect Personal Space**

During crowded events, be aware of personal space. Avoid invading someone's bubble, and be mindful of where you place your belongings to avoid creating obstacles.

### **9. Be a Responsible Drinker**

If alcoholic beverages are served, enjoy them responsibly. Never overindulge; always have a designated driver or arrange alternative transportation if needed.

### **10. Gracious Gratitude**

After the celebration, take a moment to thank the host for their hospitality. A simple thank-you note or a heartfelt message of appreciation can go a long way in expressing your gratitude.

By following these etiquette tips, you'll make the 4th of July enjoyable for yourself and contribute to a harmonious and delightful celebration for everyone involved. Have a safe and happy Independence Day!