CLARENCE FIRE DISTRICT NO. 1

AMERICAN FLAG DISPLAY ON FIRE APPARATUS

POLICY STATEMENT:

Clarence Fire District No. 1 recognizes that the display of the American Flag on fire apparatus reflects the district's commitment to public service, patriotism, and the proud traditions of the American fire service.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to establish uniform standards governing the authorization, display, placement, maintenance, inspection, and retirement of American Flags displayed on fire apparatus owned by Clarence Fire District No. 1. This policy is intended to promote consistency throughout the district, ensure the American Flag is displayed with dignity and respect, and ensure compliance with the United States Flag Code whenever practical.

OBJECTIVES:

1. **Honor and Respect:** Establish uniform standards that ensure the American Flag is displayed in a manner that appropriately reflects the values of the United States and the traditions of the fire service.
2. **Uniformity:** Promote a professional and consistent appearance across all district apparatus by establishing standardized practices for the installation, display, maintenance, inspection, and replacement of American Flags.
3. **Safety:** Ensure that any American Flag displayed on fire apparatus does not interfere with the safe operation of the vehicle, obstruct the driver's vision, impede emergency warning devices, or create hazards to firefighters or the public.
4. **Maintenance and Preservation:** Provide procedures to ensure that all apparatus-mounted American Flags remain clean, serviceable, securely mounted, and are promptly replaced when necessary.
5. **Accountability:** Clearly establish responsibility for the inspection, maintenance, replacement, and retirement of American Flags displayed on district apparatus.
6. **Compliance:** Encourage adherence to the principles of the United States Flag Code while recognizing the operational needs of an emergency service organization.

GUIDELINES:

A. Authorized Display

1. The display of the American Flag on any fire apparatus owned by Clarence Fire District No. 1 is authorized only with the approval of the Board of Fire Commissioners.
2. American Flags may be displayed on:
    - The rear of fire apparatus utilizing an approved flag staff or mounting hardware.
    - As an approved decal or painted graphic on the sides or cab of apparatus.
    - Other locations specifically approved by the Fire District that do not interfere with apparatus operations or safety.
3. All apparatus-mounted flags shall be of an appropriate size, constructed of durable outdoor-rated material, made in the United States of America, and mounted using hardware designed for vehicle applications.

B. Placement and Display

1. Vehicle-mounted American Flags shall be displayed in accordance with the customs and traditions established by the United States Flag Code, while recognizing the unique operational requirements of emergency response vehicles.
2. When displayed on the sides of apparatus as a decal or painted image:
    - The union (blue field of stars) shall face toward the front of the apparatus, creating the appearance that the flag is advancing forward.
    - On the passenger side, the union shall appear in the upper right corner.
    - On the driver's side, the union shall appear in the upper left corner.
3. Flags flown from the rear of the apparatus shall be securely attached and positioned so they do not obstruct emergency lighting, warning devices, mirrors, cameras, hose beds, ladders, equipment compartments, or the driver's field of vision.
4. Flags shall never be displayed in a manner that allows them to drag upon the ground, become entangled in equipment, or interfere with emergency operations.
5. During periods of national, state, or community mourning, apparatus-mounted American Flags shall *not* be lowered to half-staff. The United States Flag Code provides for flags displayed on stationary flagpoles to be flown at half-staff; however, there is no recognized method for displaying a vehicle-mounted flag at half-staff. During officially recognized periods of mourning, an approved black mourning ribbon *may* be affixed to the flagstaff, immediately below the finial, for the duration of the official mourning period. The mourning ribbon shall not be attached directly to or obscure any portion of the American Flag.

C. Maintenance and Inspection

1. All American Flags displayed on district apparatus shall be maintained in a clean, dignified, and serviceable condition at all times.
2. Torn, faded, frayed, excessively soiled, or otherwise unserviceable flags shall be removed from service and replaced as soon as practical.
3. Truck Officers shall routinely inspect the American Flag on their assigned apparatus and promptly report any damage or replacement needs through the chain of command.
4. The Fire Chief or designee shall oversee procurement of replacement flags and approved mounting hardware as needed.
5. Mandatory Inspections: All apparatus-mounted American flags shall undergo a formal inspection twice per year during:
    a. The annual Fire District Inspection
    b. In conjunction with Memorial Day parade preparations.

D. Operational Use

1. American Flags may remain displayed during normal emergency operations, training activities, parades, funerals, ceremonies, public education events, and other official district functions.
2. Drivers/Operators shall ensure flags are properly secured prior to vehicle movement and shall immediately report any damage or safety concerns.
3. Flags shall be temporarily removed whenever weather conditions, maintenance activities, roadway hazards, or emergency operations create a reasonable likelihood of damaging the flag or creating a safety hazard.
4. The safe operation of the apparatus shall always take precedence over the display of the American Flag.

E. Retirement of Flags

1. American Flags that are no longer fit for display shall be retired in a dignified and respectful manner consistent with accepted customs for flag retirement, including through recognized veterans' organizations, fire service organizations, organizations experienced in proper flag retirement or by other appropriate ceremonial means.

F. Prohibited Uses

1. The American Flag shall not be altered, defaced, or modified in any manner.
2. The American Flag shall not be used for advertising, political messaging, commercial promotion, or decorative purposes unrelated to the official mission of the Fire District.
3. Flags shall never be used as seat covers, draping, or for covering equipment.
4. Apparatus-mounted flags shall not obstruct emergency equipment, create a hazard, or interfere with emergency response operations.
5. Flags shall not be displayed in a manner than allows them to drag upon the ground, become entangled in apparatus equipment, or interfere with firefighting, rescue, EMS, or other emergency operations.
6. Nothing in this policy authorizes the display of any flag in a manner that diminishes the dignity of the American Flag or the reputation of Clarence Fire District No. 1.

G. Special Events and Ceremonial Display

Nothing in this policy shall prohibit the temporary display of ceremonial or commemorative flags approved by the Board of Fire Commissioners for special events, memorial services, funerals, patriotic observances, or other official district functions, provided such displays do not compromise safety or diminish the dignity afforded to the American Flag.

REFERENCES:

- United States Flag Code (Title 4, United States Code, Chapter 1)
- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1901, *Standard for Automotive Fire Apparatus* (as applicable)

This policy was adopted July 13, 2026, by order of the Board of Fire Commissioners, Clarence Fire District No. 1.