

Estonia Today

Segments from the Estonian Flag Act

On 1 January 2006, the new State Flag Act enters into force in Estonia. The most important change introduced by the new law is that all individuals have the right to use the state flag as a national flag whenever they feel it fit to do so, but the use of the flag must be appropriate and respectful of time-honoured traditions. State flags are permanently flown over state institutions, local and city governments, and also at border crossing points.

The new law reduces the number of official flag days from present fifteen to thirteen, including 9 May and Europe Day. Election days and referendum days are also flag days. However, flags must be hoisted on all buildings on only three of these days.

Another major change compared to the past situation is the hoisting of state flags on school and university buildings on all schooldays. This regulation entered into force on the 1 September 2005.

The goal of this Act is to set out the shape and description of the Estonian flag along with the conditions and regulations for its use on the basis of the new principles. The Act establishes utilization regulations for state and local government institutions, and provides citizens with freedom to use the flag.

§1. The Estonian Flag

- (1) The Estonian Flag is Blue-Black-White.
- (2) The Estonian Flag is used as the national and state flag.

§2. Description of the Estonian Flag

- (1) The Estonian national flag is a tri-colour, with three equal horizontal bands. The upper one is blue, the middle one black and the lower white. The width to length ratio is 7:11.

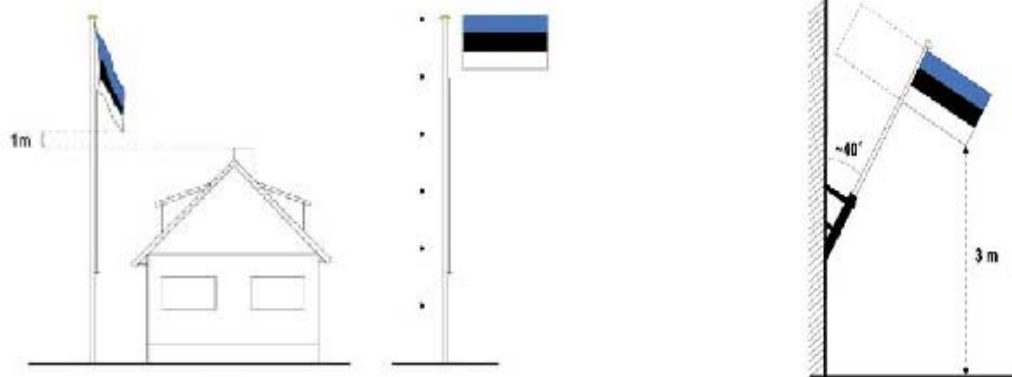
§4. Display and use of the Estonian Flag

- (1) Everyone has the right to display and use the Estonian flag as long as it is in accordance with the act and follows honoured traditions.
- (2) The Estonian flag is displayed on buildings and stationary flag staffs on Independence Day, Victory Day and the Restoration of Independence Day.

§5. Daily display of the Estonian Flag

- (1) The Estonian Flag is not lowered from the buildings of the Riigikogu, the Estonian Government, the Supreme Court, other courthouses, the State Audit, the Chancellor of Justice, Ministries, the Bank of Estonia, local and city governments, and border crossing points.
- (2) The Estonian Flag is displayed at Estonian foreign representations according to the laws and norms of the host nation.
- (3) The Estonian Flag is to be displayed on elementary and high schools, vocational schools, institutions of professional higher education and universities on school days.
- (5) Flags that are continuously displayed must be illuminated during hours of darkness.





§6. Flag Days

3 January – Day of Commemoration to the War of Independence fighters

(Vabadussõjas võidelnute mälestuspäev)

2 February – Anniversary of the Tartu Peace Treaty

(Tartu rahulepingu aastapäev)

24 February – Independence Day, Anniversary of the Republic of Estonia

(Eesti iseseisvuspäev)

14 March – Native Language Day (Emakeele päev)

every second Sunday in May – Mothers' Day (Emadepäev)

9 May – Europe Day (Euroopa Päev)

4 June – National Flag Day (Lipupäev)

14 June Day of Mourning and Commemoration (Leinapäev) *Flags are flown as mourning flags*

23 June – Victory Day (Võidupüha)

24 June – St John's Day or Midsummer Day (Jaanipäev)

20 August – Restoration of Independence Day (Taasiseseisvumispäev)

1 September – Day of Knowledge (Teadmiste päev)

every second Sunday in November – Fathers' Day (Isadepäev)

(3) On Flag Days, government institutions, local and county governments and public legal entities, display the flag.

(4) The Estonian Government can make one-time decisions regarding the display of the Estonian Flag by government institutions, local and county governments and public legal entities, and on other days to mark events of importance for the Estonian state and its people.

§7. Hoisting and lowering the flag

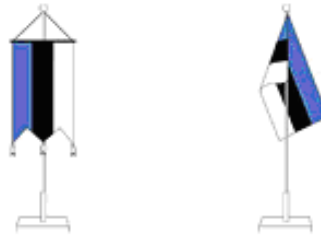
(1) The Estonian Flag is hoisted at sunrise, no later than 8.00 and is lowered at sunset, no later than 22.00.

(4) The Estonian Flag is not lowered on St. John's Day, (Midsummer's Day) June 24.

§9. Requirements for displaying the flag

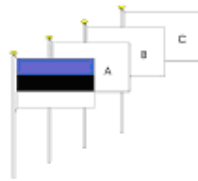
(2) The minimum size of a flag displayed on a building or on flag staffs on the roof of the building must be 105X165 centimetres.

(3) When the flag is displayed vertically the blue band should be on the observers left



§10. Displaying the Estonian Flag with other flags

- (1) If the Estonian Flag is raised with other flags, the Estonian flag must be at a position of superior prominence or honour.
- (3) The flags of other nations are placed after the Estonian Flag alphabetically according to their French name. Only the flags of European Union countries are placed alphabetically according to their name in their own language.
- (4) If the Estonian Flag is displayed with flags of other countries or international organisations and with Estonian county, city, parish or other Estonian flags, the Estonian county, city, parish or other Estonian flag must be placed to left of the international organisation's flag when looking at the line flags from behind.
- (5) Depending on the location of the line of flags or on the number of flags, points 3-4 can be changed taking into consideration that the Estonia Flag must be at a position of superior prominence or honour.



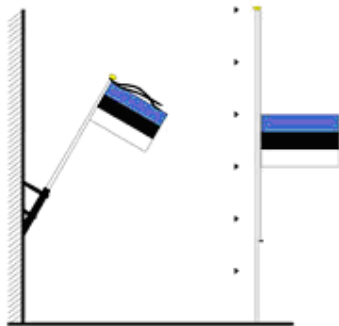
§11. Displaying the Estonian Flag with European Union Flag

- (1) The European Union Flag is displayed along with Estonian Flag on buildings of the Riigikogu, the Estonian Government, the Supreme Court, other courthouses, the State Audit, the Chancellor of Justice, Ministries, the Bank of Estonia, the General Staff of the Defence Forces, local and city governments on Europe Day and on the day of European Parliamentary elections.
- (2) The Estonian Government determines the border crossing points where the European Union Flag is to be continuously displayed with the Estonian Flag.
- (3) The Foreign Minister regulates the displaying of European Union flags at Foreign Representations. The European Union flag is displayed with the Estonian State Flag.

§12. Displaying the flag during a period of mourning

- (1) During a period of national mourning, the Estonian Flag is displayed as a flag of mourning.
- (2) When the Estonian Flag is displayed during a period of mourning, a black ribbon is attached to the top of the flagstaff or the flag is flown at half-mast.

Use of the Estonian Flag as a flag of mourning is not restricted to national days of mourning. If required, anyone can use the Estonian Flag as a flag of mourning.



§15. Use of the Estonian Flag and its colour combination

- (3) Anyone can use a pennant with the Estonian Flags colour combination. The pennant does not replace the Estonian Flag.
- (4) The image of the Estonian Flag cannot be used in a trademark.

Information on the use of the national flag and other state symbols: <http://www.riigikantselei.ee>

More information about the state symbols and holidays: www.estonica.org

OÜ Lipuvabrik, a company that produces and sells flags and other symbols for Estonia and foreign countries www.lipuvabrik.ee