

# Flag Patrol Binder



Horizons Troop 1325 at Green & Gold 2025

# Thank you for checking out Flags!

Thank you for checking out Flags from Girl Scouts of Orange County!  
We are excited to support your Flag Patrols and events. Please review the document and below information before getting started.

## What is included with your GSOC Resource Hub

### Reservation of the Flags:

American Flag  
California State Flag  
Girl Scout Flag  
Set of Gloves

### Before returning:

**\*\*You must launder the gloves\*\***

Return all flags back into the bag they were given in

Please notify Program Team of any challenges or feedback.  
[program@girlscoutsoc.org](mailto:program@girlscoutsoc.org)

We are excited to offer this resource for free to our Girl Scout community.  
Please ensure you follow the above requirements to ensure these resources continue to be available to troops for free for many years!



# How to Perform a Flag Ceremony

Girl Scouts are one of the few non-military organizations that can perform flag ceremonies! So if you're thinking of incorporating the Stars and Stripes into your next event, here's what you need to know to plan a flag ceremony.



Stars and Stripes, the Star Spangled Banner, Old Glory—whatever you call it, the American flag is an important symbol to Girl Scouts in the United States. If any of you have been to a Girl Scout event, chances are you've seen or participated in a flag ceremony. Flag ceremonies are the perfect way to start and end a whole host of activities, from holidays like Memorial Day and Independence Day to Court of Awards, bridging ceremonies, camp events, or even Service Unit meetings, and you can host them anywhere: meeting rooms, outdoor settings, large auditoriums, on stage—even on horseback!

There's no perfect recipe for a flag ceremony but the one thing they all have in common is respect for the flag. From [planning a flag ceremony](#) to [ceremony terms](#), [flag rules](#), and [ceremony commands](#), here's what you need to know:

## Flag Ceremony Terms to Know:

- Color Bearer: The color bearer is the person who carries the flag and places it on the pole or in the stand. There is one color bearer for each flag used in the ceremony. The color bearer should hold the staff (pole) at 30° angle in front of body, or hold folded flag (with point away from body) in front of body at waist level.
- Color Guard: The color guard is a team that guards the flags. Any even number of guards may be used, but usually four or six girls are sufficient. The purpose of the Color Guard of Honor is to protect the flag. Because this requires full attention, the members do not participate in any part of the flag ceremony (singing, speaking, etc.), but stand silently “At Attention”
- Caller: The caller is a designated Girl Scout who announces or calls each command or part of the ceremony.
- Line Leader: Usually part of an outdoor color guard, the line leader will lead the audience into/out of the desired formation (usually a horseshoe shape in Girl Scouts).

## Planning Your Flag Ceremony:

As you start planning for your ceremony, the best thing you can do is keep it simple. Emphasis needs to be on respect for the flag rather than on the commands or techniques. As your girls start to brainstorm, you can use these guiding questions to help them plan a complete ceremony: What is the tone we’re trying to set?

1. Who will carry the flag(s)?
2. Who will be the color guards?
3. Who will give the directions for the ceremony?
4. What song will be sung? Who will lead it?
5. Will a poem or quotation be included? Who will say or read it?
6. After the Pledge of Allegiance, will the Girl Scout Promise and the Law be said?
7. In what order will the parts of the ceremony take place?
8. When will the group practice?
9. Where will the flags be placed at the end of the ceremony?

Here are some video examples of Flag Patrols.

Example 1: This Girl Scout troop does a very simple by marching in and proceeding with the event. (Start at 3:30)

*Video Search: “Girl Scouts 101 - Flag Ceremony” by T Nugteren.*

Example 2: Troop 105 from Central California added elements like a salute, singing a different song, and silent color guards who focus on the flags instead of participating in the pledge or anthem. (Start at 6:26)

*Video Search: “Girl Scout Troop 105 Flag Ceremony Training” by Girl Scouts of Central California South.*

Example 3: The Greater LA Flag Patrol went all out for their ceremony!

*Video Search: “Girl Scout Color Guard - American Legion Ceremony - 2016” by Vicki M.*

## Proper American Flag Rules and Protocol:

Display of the American flag is governed by law to ensure that it will be treated with the respect due the official flag of a nation. This is known as the United States Flag Code. Some of the rules most useful for Girl Scouts are:

- The flag must only be displayed from sunrise to sunset, unless it is illuminated.
- The American flag must be placed in the center, and higher, when displayed with a group of state, local, or organizational flags flown from staffs. It may also be positioned to the right of other flags. (If girls were to hold the flag while facing their audience, their right side would be the flag’s own right.)
- When displayed from a staff in a public auditorium, the flag of the United States must hold the position of superior prominence, in advance of the audience, and in the position of honor at the speaker’s right as they face the audience. Any other flag should be placed to the left of the speaker.
- The flag is to be hoisted briskly and lowered slowly with dignity.
- Take every precaution to prevent the Flag from becoming soiled. It should not be allowed to touch the ground, nor to brush against objects.
- The flag, when carried in a procession with other flags, should be either on the marching right or, if there is a line of other flags, in front of the center of that line.

# Flag Ceremony Commands:

A part of the flag ceremony is precision and formality, and the traditional commands are part of that. Use whichever commands are relevant to your own flag ceremony, and feel free to mix them up as needed. Here are a possible opening and closing set of commands. These are both using as many commands as possible to show you your options, but there's no right order, or minimum amount of commands required.

## Opening:

- “Girl Scouts, Attention.”
  - Girl Scouts stand quietly and remove all headwear; this is a signal the ceremony is about to start.
- “Color guard, Attention.”
  - If the color guard is standing “at ease,” it comes to “attention.”
- “Color guard, Advance.”
  - Color guard carries the flag(s) towards flag pole or stand.
- “Color guard, post the colors.”
  - Color guard places the flag in its stand or unfolds and hoists the flags up the poles in the appropriate order (The American Flag always comes first, and the state flag if you have it is usually next, with any flags after that going in order of importance.)
- “Color guard, salute the colors.”
  - Color guard salutes the Flag and then returns to “attention.”
- “Girl Scouts, honor your colors.”
  - Girl Scouts salute the Flag.
- “We will now say the pledge of allegiance.”
  - If you have a color guard, they should stand at attention and not participate, keeping their full attention on the flag.
- “We will now sing the National Anthem.”
  - Similarly, the color guard, if you have one, should stay focused on the flag. Feel free to also pick a different patriotic song.
- “We will now say the Girl Scout Promise.”
  - Similarly, the color guard, if you have one, should stay focused on the flag.
- “Color guard dismissed.”
  - Color guard retreats to the back of the room but stays standing at attention.
- “Girl Scouts dismissed.”

## Closing:

- “Girl Scouts, Attention.”
  - Girl Scouts stand quietly and remove all headwear; this is a signal the ceremony is about to start.
- “Color guard, Attention.”
  - If the color guard is standing “at ease,” it comes to “attention.”
- “Color guard, Advance.”
  - Color guard approaches the posted flags.
- “We will now sing (insert appropriate song here, “Taps” or other relevant songs.)”
  - Color guard remains at attention and does not take place in any singing or speaking.
- “Girl Scouts, honor your colors.”
  - Color guard salutes the Flag and then returns to “attention.”
- “Color guard, retire the colors.”
  - Flag is slowly lowered and folded; American Flag first, and then in reverse order that they went up.
- “Color guard dismissed.”
  - Color guard carries the flag to an appropriate place at the back of the room.
- “Girl Scouts dismissed.”

Whether you’re adding some pomp and circumstance to your Court of Awards ceremony or celebrating the Fourth of July in style with your troop, a flag ceremony is a special Girl Scout skill, and an honor. You can even earn a Flag Ceremony patch for it! What are you waiting for? Get practicing!



# Flag Ceremony Commands:

## Short Version for Non-Girl Scout Events

### Posting, Pledge, and Promise

#### Opening:

- “Girl Scouts, Attention.”
  - Girl Scouts stand quietly and remove all headwear; this is a signal the ceremony is about to start.
- “Color guard, Attention.”
  - If the color guard is standing “at ease,” it comes to “attention.”
- “Color guard, Advance.”
  - Color guard carries the flag(s) towards the front of the stage area.
- “Color guard, post the colors.”
  - Stands can be pre-set or carried in by another Girl Scout (not the one holding the flag). Color guard places the flag in its stand. Post flags in the appropriate order (The American Flag always comes first, and the state flag if you have it is usually next, with any flags after that going in order of importance.)
- “Color guard, salute the colors.”
  - Color guard (Flag bearers) salute the Flag and then return to “attention.”
- “Girl Scouts, honor your colors.”
  - Girl Scouts place hand on heart and step back with one foot to honor the Flag. (all participants other than the Color Guard)
- “We will now say the pledge of allegiance.”
  - If you have a color guard, they should stand at attention and not participate, keeping their full attention on the flag.
- “We will now sing the National Anthem.”
  - Similarly, the color guard, if you have one, should stay focused on the flag. Feel free to also pick a different patriotic song.
- “We will now say the Girl Scout Promise.”
  - Similarly, the color guard, if you have one, should stay focused on the flag.
- “Color guard dismissed.”
  - Color guard retreats to the back of the room but stays standing at attention.
- “Girl Scouts dismissed.”

## Closing:

- “Girl Scouts, Attention.”
  - Girl Scouts stand quietly and remove all headwear; this is a signal the ceremony is about to start.
- “Color guard, Attention.”
  - If the color guard is standing “at ease,” it comes to “attention.”
- “Color guard, Advance.”
  - Color guard approaches the posted flags.
- “Girl Scouts, honor your colors.”
  - Color guard salutes the Flag and then returns to “attention.”
- “Color guard, retire the colors.”
  - Color guard removes flags from stands and faces audience with flags. Additional Girl Scouts can pick up stands at this time too.
- “Color guard and Girl Scouts, dismissed.”
  - Color guard and Girl Scouts turn in unison to the designated side of the stage to exit. Flags are carried (straight up) to an appropriate place at the back of the room.

# Flag Ceremony Commands:

## Short Version for Non-Girl Scout Events

### No Post, Opening Only, Pledge & Promise

#### Event Start:

- “Girl Scouts, Attention.”
  - Girl Scouts stand quietly and remove all headwear; this is a signal the ceremony is about to start.
- “Color guard, Attention.”
  - If the color guard is standing “at ease,” it comes to “attention.”
- “Color guard, Advance.”
  - Color guard carries the flag(s) towards the front of the stage area. (The American Flag always comes first, and the state flag if you have it is usually next, with any flags after that going in order of importance.) .
- “Color guard, present the colors.”
  - Color guard faces audience and lowers the flag slightly to a 45 degree angle so that the flag is fully extended down. If needed, the Color Guard can use strap supports to help hold the base of the pole while presenting the colors.
- “Girl Scouts, honor your colors.”
  - Girl Scouts place hand on heart and step back with one foot to honor the Flag. (all participants other than the Color Guard)
- “We will now say the pledge of allegiance.”
  - The color guard should stand at attention and not participate, keeping their full attention on holding the flag.
- “We will now say the Girl Scout Promise.”
  - Girl Scouts make the Girl Scouts sign and recite the Promise. The color guard should stand at attention and not participate, keeping their full attention on holding the flag.
- “Girl Scouts, honor your colors.”
  - Girl Scouts honor the flag and return to attention. (Not the Color Guard, who remains silent holding the flags in position.)
- “Color guard, retire the colors.”
  - Color guard straightens flag poles to a vertical position.
- “Color guard dismissed.”
  - Color guard and Girl Scouts turn in unison to the designated side of the stage to exit. Flags are carried vertically to an appropriate place at the back of the room.