

## Flag Flying and Proclamation Policy

**Department:** Legislative Services

**Approved by:** Council

**Effective Date:** October 7, 2025

### Part I. Short Title, Purpose, and Scope

#### 1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear and consistent approach to the display of flags and the issuance of proclamations within the municipality. It provides guidance on the use of municipal property for official flag displays and affirms that proclamations are not issued as part of municipal practice. This policy supports the municipality's commitment to neutrality, consistency, and the respectful use of civic spaces.

#### 2. Policy Statements

2.1 The Municipality of West Grey acknowledges that flags are a symbol of honour and pride and wishes to institute a policy which will show respect and dignity for the flags while providing opportunities to bestow an honour or express a collective sense of sorrow through the action of lowering flags to half-mast.

2.2 While the Municipality recognizes the importance of various causes and commemorative events, it maintains a neutral stance and will not issue proclamations or participate in public awareness campaigns. This approach ensures consistency, fairness, and impartiality in the Municipality's public recognition practices.

#### 3. Scope

3.1 This policy applies to all Municipal properties where flags are displayed and to all practices related to proclamations. It governs the types of flags flown, the conditions under which flags are half-masted, and the Municipality's stance on community flags and proclamations.

### Part II. Interpretation

#### 4. Headings

4.1 The division of this policy into parts and the insertion of headings are for convenient reference only and do not affect the interpretation of the policy.

#### 5. Definitions

5.1 For the purposes of this policy:

“Flag(s)” includes the National Flag of Canada, Flag of the Province of Ontario, and the Municipality of West Grey Municipal flag or any other flag permitted to be flown on a Municipality of West Grey Municipal flagpole;

"Half-mast" means positioning the centre of the Flag halfway down the mast, though the exact placement may vary by flag size, mast length, and location;

“Municipal Flagpole” includes all flagpoles on Municipal Property under the care or control of Municipal staff;

“Proclamations” means a formal public declaration issued by a municipality to recognize events, causes, or organizations;

“Public Awareness Campaign" means an organized effort to promote a cause, raise awareness, or reach a goal, and includes, but is not limited to, using decorations; symbolic ribbons, stickers, or lights; or posters, excepting posters placed on Municipal poster or bulletin boards intended for public use or as otherwise regulated by the Municipality’s bylaws.

### **Part III. Flags and Flag Flying**

#### **6. Flying of Flags on Municipal Flagpoles**

6.1 The only flags flown on Municipal flagpoles will be the National Flag of Canada, the flag of the Province of Ontario, and the Municipality of West Grey Municipal Flag.

6.2 The Municipality of West Grey will adhere wherever possible to the Flag Etiquette guideline provided by the Government of Canada.

6.3 Only one flag shall be flown per pole.

6.4 Where there are only two flag poles, the National Flag of Canada and the Municipality of West Grey Municipal Flag shall be flown.

6.5 Where there is only one flagpole, the National Flag of Canada shall be flown.

#### **7. Rules for Half-Masting of Flags**

7.1 When lowering a flag to the half-mast position, it must first be raised to the masthead (top of the flagpole) then lowered slowly to the half-mast position.

7.2 Flags on Municipal flagpoles shall be lowered to half-mast as a symbol of mourning. When half-mast, all flags on Municipal flagpoles fitted with halyards and pulleys will be lowered to half-mast. At no time will only one flag on a series of flagpoles be lowered to half-mast.

- 7.3 Flags shall be lowered to half-mast as soon as possible after the time of notification until sunset on the day of the funeral or memorial. When a funeral or memorial service will not be scheduled within two weeks of the notification, the flags will be lowered to half-mast for a period of at least 72 hours and then again on the date of the funeral or memorial service, or for a duration as advised by the Government of Canada or decided upon by the Mayor, Acting Mayor, Chief Administrative Officer, or their designate.
- 7.4 Flags shall be lowered to half-mast upon notification of the death of the following:
- i. The Sovereign or a member of the Sovereign's immediate family;
  - ii. The Governor General or a former Governor General;
  - iii. The Prime Minister or former Prime Minister;
  - iv. The Lieutenant Governor or a former Lieutenant Governor;
  - v. The Chief Justice of Canada;
  - vi. The Provincial Premier or a former Provincial Premier;
  - vii. The current local Members of the Federal or Provincial Parliaments;
  - viii. A current or past Member of Council;
  - ix. A current member of staff;
  - x. A current member of the West Grey Police or West Grey Fire Service killed in the line of duty.
- 7.5 The Mayor, Acting Mayor, or Chief Administrative Officer or their designate may approve the lowering of flags to half-mast:
- i. To recognize the passing of a citizen of the Municipality of West Grey or Grey County or a person of national or international stature who has had a significant impact on the community;
  - ii. In response to a tragic or catastrophic event in the world, consistent with the Department of Canadian Heritage.
- 7.6 Flag shall be lowered on the Municipal flagpoles in accordance with Government of Canada protocols for the following designated days:
- i. April 28, Day of Mourning for Persons Killed or Injured in the Workplace (Workers' Mourning Day);
  - ii. June 23, National Day of Remembrance for Victims of Terrorism;
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- iii. Second Sunday in September, Firefighters' National Memorial Day, unless Half-masting occurs near the place where a memorial is being observed, then Half-masting can occur according to the prescribed order of service;
- iv. Last Sunday in September, Police and Peace Officers' National Memorial Day, unless Half-masting occurs near the place where a memorial is being observed, then Half-masting can occur according to the prescribed order of service;
- v. September 30, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation;
- vi. November 11, Remembrance Day, unless Half-masting occurs at the National War Memorial or a place where remembrance is being observed, then Half-masting can occur at 11:00 or according to the prescribed order of service;
- vii. December 6, National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

7.7 If a prescribed day identified in section 6.6 falls on a weekend, flags shall be lowered to half-mast on the business day immediately preceding the designated day.

7.8 Notwithstanding section 6.3, during periods of half-mast, the flags on all Municipal flagpoles shall be flown at full-mast on the following legal holidays established under the *Holiday Act*:

- i. Victoria Day; and
- ii. Canada Day.

## **8. Disposal of Flags**

8.1 When a flag becomes tattered and is no longer in a suitable condition for use, it shall be destroyed in a dignified manner.

## **9. Request to fly Other Flags**

9.1 The flags of service clubs or other special interest groups shall not be flown on any Municipal flagpole.

9.2 The Municipality of West Grey recognizes the diversity and vibrancy of its community. However, to maintain neutrality, avoid the perception of endorsement, and ensure fairness, the Municipality does not permit the display of community flags. This approach prevents the Municipality from having to

adjudicate between competing requests and ensures that Municipal spaces remain inclusive and non-partisan.

#### **10. Monitoring and Compliance**

- 10.1 The Director of Legislative Services/Clerk shall ensure that this policy is reviewed periodically so that it remains relevant to the needs of the Municipality, in accordance with legislative requirements, and good business practices.
- 10.2 In the event that additional days of mourning are established by the Federal and Provincial Governments, they will be automatically added to this policy without the requirement for a formal policy update.
- 10.3 In cases of policy violation, the Municipality of West Grey may investigate and determine appropriate corrective action.

#### **Part IV. Proclamations and Public Awareness Campaigns**

#### **11. Proclamations and Public Awareness Campaigns**

- 11.1 The Municipality of West Grey shall not issue proclamations and shall not support public awareness campaigns.
- 11.2 While proclamations can be a meaningful form of recognition, the Municipality has chosen not to issue them to maintain a neutral stance and avoid the perception of endorsing specific causes, organizations, or viewpoints. This policy ensures consistency and fairness in Municipal communications and avoids the administrative burden of evaluating and responding to requests.