



Stratham Boy Scout Troop 185

Sponsored By Stratham Volunteer Fire Department



Retiring a United States Flag



BURNING

The United States Flag Code, Title 4, Section 8k states, "The flag, when it is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem of display, should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning." The Flag code does not authorize any particular organization with the duty of retiring unfit flags. Any one person or group can do it. Flags should be retired in private at a non-public location and the ceremony should be a solemn, dignified event. There is no one official ceremony required or recommended. Cotton and wool flags are authorized to be burned in large quantities.

According to the United States Federal Flag Code, the American flag should be customarily folded and burned while an individual either comes to attention or salutes while reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. Once the flag has been consumed and turned to ashes, the ashes should then be buried. The American flag may also be buried as an alternative to burning.

CUTTING

Synthetic flags, due to state regulations, are not allowed to be burned. An alternate option is to separate the blue star field from the stripes and then to separate the stripes from each other. Once this is done the material is no longer a flag and the pieces may be respectfully interred as part of the ceremony. When doing this one should keep the union of blue intact. Doing so symbolizes that the unity of our union should never be broken.

DROPPING OFF AT AUTHORIZED LOCATIONS

The Stratham Police Department (76 Portsmouth Avenue), Stratham Memorial School (39 Gifford Farm Rd), and the Town Municipal Offices have drop-off boxes located outside their buildings. Stratham residents may drop off flags to be retired at either location. Boy Scouts from Troop 185 collect these flags and arrange for proper retirement.

The American Legion Post 35, located at 69 High Street in Hampton NH (603.929.4695) also collects flags ready for retirement. There is a drop box located in the front of the building that is open 24/7 for Seacoast residents to drop off their flags. Each year on Flag Day, June 14, the Hampton American Legion holds an authorized burning ceremony to properly dispose of and retire United States flags. They have special permission from the Hampton Fire Department to include synthetic flags in this annual event.

Note: Only US Flags need to be properly retired. State and other flags can be disposed of in the garbage.

Sources:

<https://www.united-states-flag.com/flag-disposal.html>

<https://www.americandisposal.com/blog/how-to-retire-an-american-flag>