

**From:** Vidal, Teva (PCH)  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 22, 2021 4:21 PM  
**To:** Sarah Johnson  
**Cc:** Tellier, Genevieve (PCH)  
**Subject:** Flag Etiquette Clarification

Good afternoon,

Thank you for your question.

As I understand the situation, this concerns the best use of a singular flagpole placed in a central location in Brockton, which has come to be considered as “the” municipal flagpole. On this flagpole, normally, the National Canada is flown, but problems have arisen when the National Flag has been lowered and replaced by other flags for specific occasions, as some residents have objected to other flags taking the place the National Flag of Canada.

In order to address this situation, I would offer the following:

- 1) The regulations established by the Government of Canada regarding flag display, position of honour, and flag precedence are only obligatory on federal properties. We do certainly consider them to be examples of best practice and encourage others to follow their example. However, the municipality of Brockton has the freedom to determine its own usage within its jurisdiction.
- 2) This means that, technically speaking, the municipality’s current practice of replacing the National Flag of Canada with another flag, temporarily, does not break any laws or rules. If the municipality should decide on this practice within its own flag display protocols, it is free to do so.
  - a. If there is only one flagpole, the municipality can use it to display whichever flag it chooses.
  - b. There is no conflict with the National Flag of Canada if there is only one flagpole, and consequently only one flag that is flown at any given time. Potential conflict might arise if another flag were displayed simultaneously, for example on an adjacent flagpole, in a way that did not respect the [position of honour and proper order of precedence for flags](#).
  - c. In any case, [two flags should not be flown on the same flagpole](#).
- 3) Understanding that there are concerns regarding the optics of this practice and that residents have questioned whether or not it is appropriate, the municipality may choose to follow federal guidelines more closely.
  - a. In this case, the National Flag of Canada would ideally not be displaced.
  - b. The ideal solution, to display other flags for special occasions, would be to erect at least one more flagpole, in order to display other flags when needed without interfering with the precedence of the National Flag of Canada (as long as proper positioning of the flags is observed).
- 4) Should the option of erecting one or more additional flagpoles be impossible for reasons of timing, space, or other material concerns, and should a single flagpole remain in use, one way to avoid questions of precedence concerning the National Flag of Canada would be to fly the flag of the municipality, if one exists, as a regular flag, rather than the National Flag of Canada.
  - a. As there is technically no requirement for the municipality to fly the National Flag of Canada in any given location that is not federal property, this infringes no rules.
  - b. A municipal flag, for example one displaying the municipal logo, would be an appropriate emblem to represent a common municipal space.
  - c. Should the municipality wish to contemplate the creation of officially-registered heraldic emblems, including a flag, it can do so by contacting the [Canadian Heraldic Authority](#). However, a municipal flag need not be created through the Heraldic Authority to be considered official by the municipality.
- 5) In every case, if there is more than one flagpole being used, proper order of precedence for flags would need to be followed in order to respect position of honour.

I hope these considerations help you in determining the best practice for your specific circumstances within the municipality of Brockton. Please do not hesitate to be in touch if you have any additional questions and if I may be of assistance in any other way.

Very best regards,

Teva Vidal, Ph.D.  
Agent de programme | Program Officer  
Direction du Cérémonial d’État et du protocole | State Ceremonial and Protocol Directorate  
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**From:** Sarah Johnson  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 21, 2021 8:20 AM  
**To:** Guilbeault, Honorable Steven (PCH); INFO/INFO (PCH)  
**Cc:** Fiona Hamilton  
**Subject:** Flag Etiquette Clarification  
**Importance:** High

Good morning,

The Municipality of Brockton has a Flag Etiquette and Protocol Policy, that we are considering amending to clarify the use of our community flag pole which displays flags from particular organizations in order to recognize events or causes. I have attached our By-Law/Policy to this email for reference.

Currently, our flag policy states in section 6.3 that “Flags flown by special request will take the place of the Municipal Flag, or National Flag for the duration that the request is granted, or for an appropriate period specified by the Clerk to mark an event.”

We have received some comments from residents regarding this process, and would appreciate clarification and confirmation on the appropriate rules. In accordance with the National Guidelines, “The National Flag of Canada should always be flown on its own mast or flag pole; flag protocol states that it is improper to fly two or more flags on the same mast or flag pole (for example, one beneath the other).”

Therefore, we are hoping to provide more clarity in our policy and ensure we are following proper protocol. Currently, in the absence of a community flag, that designated flag pole flies the National Flag. I would think that in order to follow protocol, perhaps that designated community flag pole should only display a Municipal flag year-round, and therefore, we would not be breaking etiquette of removing the National Flag to display a community flag.

If you could please provide us with your opinion at your earliest convenience, that would be appreciated. We are hoping to bring forward an associated report and possibly amending By-Law to our Council Meeting on April 27, 2021, and would require the information by Friday, April 23, 2021 if possible.

Thank you very much!  
Sincerely,

**Sarah Johnson, Dipl. M.A., AMP**  
Jr. Deputy Clerk

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The Municipality of Brockton is taking extra precautions to protect the health and well-being of our staff and residents during the COVID-19 outbreak, while continuing to deliver essential services. Brockton staff are available by email or phone and working diligently to serve the community and respond to the COVID-19 outbreak. Updated information about the coronavirus is available on our website, at [Brockton.ca/COVID19](http://Brockton.ca/COVID19). Please continue to practice social distancing, wear a mask and follow all health measures recommended by Health Canada, check in on your neighbours, and support local businesses where possible. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.