

# THE QUÉBEC FLAG

A guide to the implementation  
of the new regulation





## INTRODUCTION

In 1999, the National Assembly passed the *Act respecting the flag and emblems of Québec* in order to combine the main provisions on the subject in a single document. Under the Act, the government may determine, by regulation, the conditions governing the use of the flag. In June 2002, the government enacted the *Regulation respecting the flag of Québec*, which sets forth the conditions under which the *fleurdelisé* is to be flown by public institutions and establishments under the authority of the Administration.

The approach adopted with regard to displaying the flag ties in with the context of the visual identity policy. Thus, as with a government signature, the *fleurdelisé* enables Quebecers to recognize the authority responsible for a service provided to them.

The ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration is responsible for applying the Act and the Regulation pertaining to the flag. However, responsibility for identifying services with regard to the general public lies with all public institutions and establishments under the jurisdiction of the Québec State.

This brochure was designed with that in mind and for the purpose of facilitating the implementation of the *Regulation respecting the flag of Québec*. It sets forth the main principles to be taken into account in displaying the flag, and contains the texts of the Act and the Regulation.



Photo : Daniel Lessard, National Assembly



## **A guide to displaying the flag at public institutions under the jurisdiction of the Québec State**

### **1- Introduction**

This guide is intended for persons who are responsible for displaying the Québec flag within the Public Administration. All government departments and bodies should in fact mandate someone within their organization to see to it that the flag is displayed correctly, and flown at half mast when the government so decides. To facilitate the implementation of the *Regulation respecting the flag of Québec*, the general rules governing the use of the flag are given in this brochure.

### **2- Displaying the flag at a public institution**

Under the *Act respecting the flag and emblems of Québec* (1999), the *fleurdelisé* is the national emblem of Québec. It bears witness to the authority and jurisdiction of the State. The meaning invested in displaying the flag at a public institution is explained in section 1 of the *Regulation respecting the flag of Québec*:

*« As the national emblem, the flag of Québec must be officially displayed by a public institution or an establishment under the authority of the Administration in order to identify the former as belonging to the latter. »*

Thus, as with a government signature, the flag enables Quebecers to recognize the authority responsible for a service provided to them.

### **3- Public institutions governed by the *Act respecting the flag and emblems of Québec* and the *Regulation respecting the flag of Québec***

Under the Act and the attendant Regulation, all institutions under the jurisdiction of the Québec State are required to display the Québec flag. The institutions concerned are the following: the National Assembly, government departments and bodies (e.g. Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec, Commission de toponymie du Québec), government corporations, school boards, educational institutions, health and social services institutions, and courts of justice (see the official text for a list of the categories of institutions covered by the Regulation).

In the case of municipalities, these provisions take precedence over all municipal by-laws.

### **4- Basic rules for displaying the flag**

In all circumstances, public institutions and establishments must display a flag that complies with the standards of the Bureau de normalisation du Québec.

A flag of the official dimensions—that is, of the proportions two by width and three by length—must be used (section 1 of the Act).

The flag must always be in good condition. It must not be lacerated, dirty or old.



Since placing a flag beneath another one means that the flag underneath is in a position of inferiority, there should be only one flag per mast.

Outdoor masts must be equipped with a device for raising the flag (an internal or external halyard) so that the flag can be changed easily, or flown at half mast when the government so decides.

## 5- Displaying the flag outside a building

The flag enables Quebecers to locate and recognize a place where public services are provided. It is therefore essential for the flag to be flown in full view, aloft and free.

The flag needs clearance for optimal visibility. Hence, the flag and its mast must not be in conflict with neighbouring elements or parts of the building that could obscure the view of the emblem.

Greater decorum in displaying the flag can be achieved by using a dark mast topped by a gold-coloured knob or ball (diameter of approximately 150 mm or 6 in.). A dark (dark bronze, black or navy blue) finish will make the mast or flagpole stand out more against decorative elements such as light fixtures.

### 5.1 Displaying the flag on a building

When the flag is flown on the roof of a building, factors such as the height of the building and the support capability of the structure must be taken into account. The flag must be displayed at the highest point of the building, at the middle of the building or above its main facade, where permitted by the architecture, and there must be good clearance between the flag and the edge of the roof (Illustration 1). In the case of very large buildings, the architecture may require that more than one mast be installed. The mast must be affixed directly to the roof or to the inside of the parapet. The length of the mast must be proportional to the size of the flag displayed. A flag of 180 cm by 270 cm (6 ft. by 9 ft.) on a 9-m (30-ft.) mast, or a flag of 120 cm by 180 cm (4 ft. by 6 ft.) on a 7.6-m (25-ft.) mast, is suitable for large buildings.

In the case of a large building located very close to the street, a flagpole slanting outward from the building, either above or near the main entrance, must also be installed (Illustration 2). The flag should not blow in front of a window, too close to a wall element such as a balcony or behind something that could hide it from view (e.g. a tree).



Illustration 1

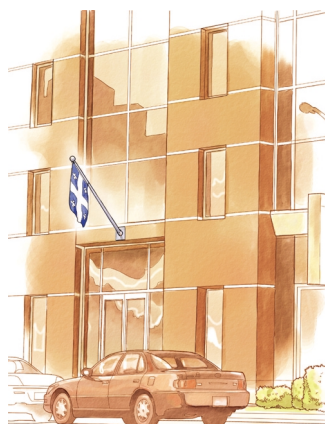


Illustration 2



Illustration 3

Finally, in the case of a small building (for instance, an SAQ or SAAQ outlet), a single flagpole, slanting outward from the building above or near the entrance, can be installed (Illustration 3). A smaller flag—60 cm by 90 cm (2 ft. by 3 ft.), or 90 cm by 135 cm (3 ft. by 4.5 ft.)—would generally be displayed.

## 5.2 Displaying the flag in front of a building

The location of a flag displayed in front of a building varies from site to site. To enhance the flag's visibility, the following factors must be taken into account:

- There must be adequate clearance between the mast on the one hand, and the main facade and the street on the other.
- If the building is on a street corner, advantage should be taken of the best vantage point from two streets.
- The flag should be positioned at the main entrance of the building.
- A light fixture is necessary to ensure the flag's visibility at night. The device must not be noticeable during the day.



Illustration 4

A mast that is installed in the ground must be proportional in length to the size of the flag displayed (Illustration 4). Countries generally apply the following rule: a flag-height to pole-height ratio of approximately 1 to 7. Hence, a flag that is 120 cm high by 180 cm long (4 ft. by 6 ft.), the most common dimensions for flags displayed by public institutions, requires a 9-m (30-ft.) mast; a flag of 180 cm by 270 cm (6 ft. by 9 ft.) requires a 15-m (50-ft.) mast.

A mast that is accessible to the public should be equipped with an internal halyard and a locking device to protect operating mechanisms and prevent vandalism.



## 6- Displaying the flag inside a building

The flag serves the same purpose when displayed inside a public building as when displayed outside a public building—that is, it tells the general public that the service provided at the building is a government service.

The flag is customarily displayed on a flagpole in all reception areas where a government service is dispensed directly to the public, (e.g. SAAQ counters, the loans and bursaries service of the ministère de l'Éducation and local employment centres). This also applies to reception areas in CLSCs, hospitals and school boards.

This type of installation is mandatory for all public bodies required by regulation to display the Québec flag, “if the body occupies only part of the building and is not on the outside perimeter of the building” (section 8 of the Regulation).

The flag, once it has been placed on the pole, must not touch the ground or the base of the pole. One of two methods can be used to place the flag on the pole. Method 1: Place the flag on the hook (on the left side of the mast); attach the rope and stretch it taut on the pole; pull the flag out to the right side, then slowly let it go until it falls into place in front of the pole; adjust the flag so that it is arranged loosely around the pole. Method 2: Attach the flag to the pole and pull it out to the right side; take the bottom of the flag, near the fle ur-de-lis closest to the pole, in the left hand and take the middle of the flag, at the top of the cross, in the right hand; bring both hands together in front of the pole; fold the flag loosely toward the back and let it go until it falls into place around the pole; adjust as necessary.

When the Québec flag is properly displayed, two fleur-de-lis slanting upward to the right can be seen (illustration 5).

At an event where there are speakers, the flag must be placed on the speaker's right, that is, on the audience's left. Similarly, when the flag is displayed in an office, it must be on the visitor's left.

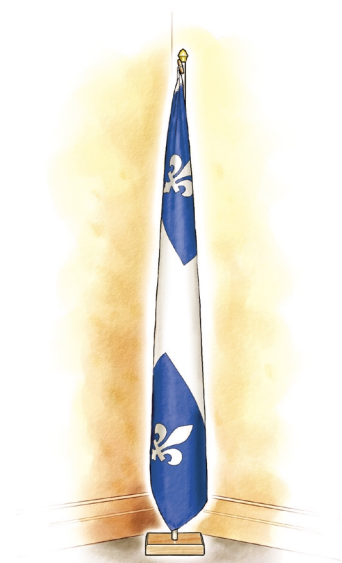


Illustration 5

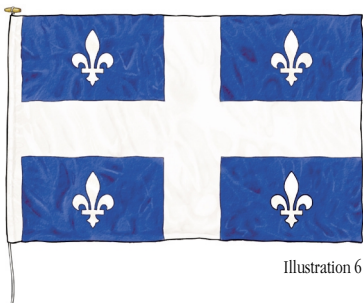


Illustration 6

## 7- Displaying the flag without a mast or pole

When the flag is displayed on a wall indoors or outdoors, or during a special ceremony, it can be placed flat against the wall, horizontally, or suspended vertically. In both cases, the first quarter—that is, the upper quarter nearest the halyard—must be at the top, on the observer's left (Illustration 6, Illustration 7). The fasteners must be as discreet as possible, and nothing else must be above the flag.

However, it is preferable to display the flag on a vertical pole or to use table flags.



Illustration 7

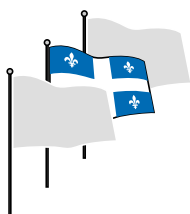
## 8- Position of honour

For certain specific events (national holidays, official receptions or meetings, visits by foreign delegations, etc.), an administration may have to display two, or even several, different flags. In all such cases, the Québec flag must occupy the position of honour.



### 8.1 Two flags

The position of honour is on the observer's left, facing the flags.



### 8.2 Three flags

The position of honour is in the centre. The second most important flag is on the observer's left, and the third most important flag on the observer's right.



### 8.3 More than three flags

The position of honour is at the end of the row, on the observer's left. The other flags are placed in alphabetical order, according to the French equivalent of the country's usual name.

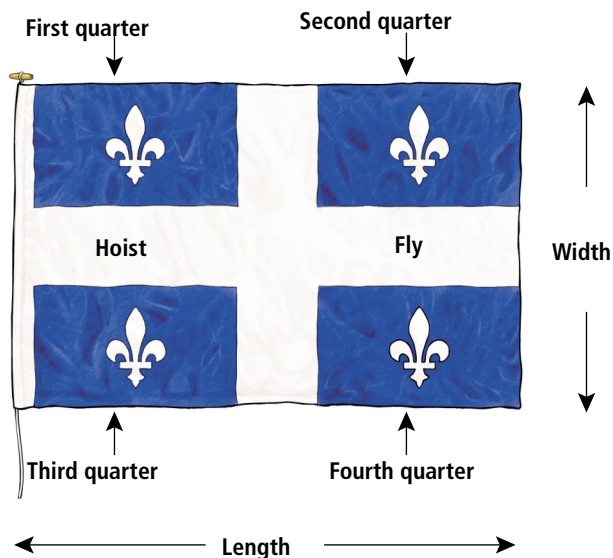
In certain specific cases, such as when the flag of an international organization or a federate state is displayed, a different order is sometimes required. Such questions can be solved by referring to the protocol division of the ministère des Relations internationales, which plays an advisory role with regard to whether flags other than the Québec flag should be displayed and how to display them.



## 9- Half mast

Under section 10 of the *Regulation respecting the flag of Québec*, public institutions fly the Québec flag at half mast when the government declares a state of national mourning. The flag is lowered halfway down the mast or to a point just above the halfway mark (so that it is out of reach).

To indicate a state of mourning on an indoor flagpole, a ribbon of black crepe is tied around the top of the pole. The ribbon must be about 15 cm wide and twice as long as the flag. Any other flag or banner displayed with the Québec flag must be removed for the period during which the Québec flag is at half mast, or half-masted if such a step is in line with the position of the authority concerned.



## GLOSSARY

### Parts of the flag

Canton:	The synonym of "quarter".
Field:	Surface of the flag, e.g. azure field, i.e. the blue background of the <i>fleurdelisé</i> .
Fly:	The half of the flag farthest from the halyard. Antonym: hoist.
Halyard:	The rope used to raise the flag to the desired height on the mast.
Hoist:	The half of the flag closest to the halyard.
Mourning ribbon:	A wide black ribbon attached to the flagpole and used to indicate half-masting.
Quarter:	Each of the four squares into which the cross divides the field. The first quarter, or place of honour in the flag, is the upper half of the hoist.
Toggle:	The piece of wood, on the rope of the flag, used to attach the flag to the halyard.





## ***AN ACT RESPECTING THE FLAG AND EMBLEMS OF QUÉBEC*** **(R.S.Q., c. D-12.1)**

**1.** The flag of Québec is a white cross on a blue field, with a white fleur-de-lis in each canton or, in heraldic terms, *azure, a cross between four fleur-de-lis argent*.

The flag is of the proportions three by length and two by width.  
1999, c. 51, s. 1.

**2.** The flag is the national emblem of Québec and must be flown on the central tower of the Parliament Building.

As the national emblem of Québec, the flag shall be displayed at official events and in the places, cases and circumstances determined by regulation of the Government.

In all cases, the flag of Québec has precedence over any other flag or emblem.  
1999, c. 51, s. 2.

**3.** The twenty-first day of January shall be Québec Flag Day.

1999, c. 51, s. 3.

**4.** The coat of arms of Québec, which is the emblem of the State, is established by the Government, which may authorize its use.

1999, c. 51, s. 4.

**5.** The emblematic tree of Québec is the yellow birch, known scientifically as *Betula alleghaniensis Britton*.

The emblematic flower of Québec is the blue flag, known scientifically as *Iris versicolor L.*

The emblematic bird of Québec is the snowy owl, known scientifically as *Nyctea scandiaca (L.)*.  
1999, c. 51, s. 5.

**6.** The Government may, by regulation,

- (1) determine conditions governing the use of the emblems of Québec,
- (2) fix standards for the manufacture and reproduction of the emblems, and
- (3) standardize the representation of the emblems.

1999, c. 51, s. 6.

**7.** No person may use an emblem of Québec in such a way as to falsely suggest that

- (1) the user is vested with the authority of the State or acts on behalf or with the authorization or approval of the State, or
- (2) a document, an instrument, information, a product or a service emanates from the State or one of its institutions.

1999, c. 51, s. 7.

**8.** Every person who contravenes section 7 is guilty of an offence and is liable to a fine of not less than \$250 nor more than \$50,000, having regard, in particular, to the profits derived from the offence and the damage caused to the State or one of its institutions.

1999, c. 51, s. 8.

**9.** The arms of Québec, granted on 26 May 1868 by Her Majesty Queen Victoria, shall remain the property of the State.

1999, c. 51, s. 9.

**10.** *(Omitted).*  
1999, c. 51, s. 10.

not in force

c. C-19, a. 318.1,  
repealed

**11.** Section 318.1 of the Cities and Towns Act (chapter C-19) is repealed. not in force  
C. C-19, s. 318.1, repealed.  
1999, c. 51, s. 11.

not in force

c. C-27.1, a. 146,  
repealed

**12.** not in force 12. Article 146 of the Municipal Code of Québec (chapter C-27.1) is repealed.  
C. C-27.1, s. 146, repealed.  
1999, c. 51, s. 12

**13.** *(Amendment integrated into c. S-6.1, s. 2).*  
1999, c. 51, s. 13.

**14.** The Décret sur les armoiries du Québec (R.R.Q., chapter D-13, r.1), the Order respecting the flag of Québec (R.R.Q., chapter D-13, r.2) and the Order respecting the use of the flag and coat of arms of Québec (R.R.Q., chapter D-13, r.3) are deemed to have been made under this Act.  
1999, c. 51, s. 14.

**15.** The Government shall designate the Minister responsible for the administration of this Act.  
1999, c. 51, s. 15.

*The Minister of Relations with the Citizens and Immigration is responsible for the administration of this Act. O.C. 1295-99 dated 1 December 1999, (1999) 131 G.O. 2 (French), 6163.*

**16.** *(Omitted).*  
1999, c. 51, s. 16.



## ***Regulation respecting the flag of Québec***

*An Act respecting the flag and emblems of Québec*  
(R.S.Q., c. D-12.1, ss. 2 and 6)

**1.** As the national emblem, the flag of Québec must be officially displayed by a public institution or an establishment under the authority of the Administration in order to identify the former as belonging to the latter.

**2.** Thus, the flag of Québec must be flown on the buildings of bodies whose members are appointed by the National Assembly and on the buildings of the persons appointed by the National Assembly.

It must also be flown on the buildings of the bodies of the Administration comprising

(1) all Government departments;

(2) all bodies a majority of the members of which are appointed by the Government or by a Minister;

(3) all bodies at least half of the expenditures of which are borne directly by the consolidated revenue fund;

(4) all bodies whose personnel is appointed in accordance with the Public Service Act (R.S.Q., c. F-3.1.1); and

(5) all bodies whose capital stock forms part of the domain of the State.

A person appointed and designated by the Government or by a Minister, together with the personnel the person manages, is, in respect of the functions assigned to him by law, by the Government or by the Minister, considered a body of the Administration.

**3.** The flag of Québec must be flown on every building in which sits a court governed by the Courts of Justice Act (R.S.Q., c. T-16), the Administrative Tribunal of Québec or any body that exercises an adjudicative function under the jurisdiction of Québec.

**4.** The flag of Québec must be flown on the buildings of the following municipal bodies:

(1) the building where a municipality council or a borough council sits; and

(2) the administrative centre of a metropolitan community, an intermunicipal board, an public transit operating authority, an

It must also be flown on a municipal library and in any other place where the municipality flies its banner.

**5.** The flag of Québec must be flown on the schools or administration buildings of the following bodies:

(1) a school board governed by the Education Act (R.S.Q., c. I-13.3) or by the Education Act for Cree, Inuit and Naskapi Native Persons (R.S.Q., c. I-14) and the Conseil scolaire de l'île de Montréal;

(2) a general and vocational college ;

(3) an educational institution referred to in section 5 of the Act respecting the Ministère de l'Éducation (R.S.Q., c. M-15) ; and

(4) an educational institution accredited for purposes of subsidies under the Act respecting private education (R.S.Q., c. E-9.1).

It must be flown at the main entrance of educational institutions at the university level referred to in paragraphs 1 to 9 of section 1 of the Act respecting educational institutions at the university level (R.S.Q., c. E-14.1) or on their buildings.

It must also be displayed in any other place where a body referred to in this section displays its banner.

**6.** The flag of Québec must be flown on the buildings of the following bodies in the health and social services sector:

(1) public institutions governed by the Act respecting health services and social services (R.S.Q., c. S-4.2) and by the Act respecting health services and social services for Cree Native persons (R.S.Q., c. S-5);

(2) private institutions governed by those acts and funded by the consolidated revenue fund; and

(3) regional boards and regional health and social services councils established under those acts.

**7.** The flag of Québec may be flown in front of buildings rather than on them.

**8.** The flag of Québec may be displayed in the public entrance inside a building if the body occupies only part of the building and is not on the outside perimeter of the building.

**9.** The flag of Québec must be displayed in the room in which sit the bodies referred to in section 3 or the councils of the bodies referred to in sections 4 to 6.

**10.** A body referred to in this Regulation must fly the flag at half mast where the Government so decides.

**11.** Any displayed flag must comply with the standards of the Bureau de normalisation du Québec.

The flag must bear no tears or lacerations.

**12.** A body referred to in this Regulation must not display the flag of Québec on a mast or flagpole together with another flag or banner.

**13.** This Regulation replaces the Order respecting the flag of Québec (R.R.Q., 1981, c. D-13, r.2).

**14.** This Regulation comes into force on the fifteenth day following the date of its publication in the *Gazette officielle du Québec*.

This Regulation was published in the *Gazette officielle du Québec*, Part 2, June 19, 2002 (202, G.O.2, 2685)

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

For further information, contact Michèle-André Gosselin,  
of the Direction générale de l'information gouvernementale  
of the ministère des Relations avec les citoyens  
et de l'Immigration,

at **(418) 528-8968**

or by e-mail at

**michele-a.gosselin@mrci.gouv.qc.ca**

### **To order official flags**

A catalogue of merchandise offering various flag sizes is available to departments, bodies and other State establishments or institutions through the Direction générale de l'information gouvernementale.

The catalogue can be accessed via the government Intranet (**[www.intranet.qc](http://www.intranet.qc)**) or e-mailed to persons who request it by contacting Caroline Girard at **(418) 644-2308**.

You will thus be assured that the flag you display is up to standard.

To ensure that a flag in good condition is always flown outdoors, a sufficient number of flags must be kept in stock. Note that discounts are granted depending on the size of the order.

**Relations  
avec les citoyens  
et Immigration**

**Québec** 