

ADMINISTRATIVE MEMORANDUM No. 85

**SUBJECT: USE OF THE FLAG OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES
AND THE FLAGS OF THE MEMBER STATES**

I. Decision:

The Secretary General has decided that the following instructions shall be issued for the use of the flag of the Organization of American States:

1. The flag of the Organization of American States shall be raised at the highest point of all buildings and properties occupied by the Organization. According to universal practice, it shall be raised at daybreak and lowered at sunset. The offices of the General Secretariat in the member states and the specialized organizations of the OAS shall follow the same practice as at Headquarters.
2. The flags of the member states and the OAS flag shall be flown outside the building that serves as the principal site of any OAS conference or meeting held at the ministerial level away from headquarters.
3. During sessions of the General Assembly, the flags of the member states shall be displayed alphabetically in Spanish, or in order of precedence¹, followed by the OAS flag. If the country hosting the General Assembly session wishes to set the OAS flag in a prominent spot, it shall be placed in the center, immediately to the right of the host country's flag. These two flags should be set apart from the others at a distance equal to 150% of the distance between the other flags, without interrupting the order of placement. All the flags shall be of the same size. The host country's flag and the OAS flag may be set back slightly, but may not be raised higher than the others.

When placed in a straight line or a semicircle, the flags, viewed from left to right from the front, shall be arranged alphabetically in Spanish according to the names of the member countries. Alternatively, when so decided the flags shall be arranged according to the order of precedence of the member states established by lot for the General Assembly session, conference, or meeting in question.

At events organized by the country hosting the General Assembly session, conference, or meeting, but not sponsored by the Organization of American States, the General Assembly, or the body holding the meeting, the flag protocol established by the host country may be observed.

¹ Always from left to right when viewed from the front.

4. At Meetings of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, and at other conferences and meetings of the Organization, the practice followed at General Assembly sessions shall apply.
5. During protocolary visits by heads of state and government, vice presidents, and foreign ministers, the flags of the member states shall be flown in front of the Main Building, arranged alphabetically in Spanish when viewed from left to right from the front. All the flags shall be of the same size. The flags shall also flank the left-hand staircase of the Main Building (which the honored guest will climb) alphabetically in Spanish, alternating in order from the left and then right sides of the steps, beginning with the first step.

During protocolary greetings, the flag of the visiting official shall be placed at the beginning of the reception line to the left, and the OAS flag shall be placed at the end of the line.

6. In the case of non-protocolary visits, the flags shall be displayed neither in front of the Main Building nor on the staircase.
7. When the Permanent Council meets, the OAS flag alone shall be placed to the right of the dais.
8. At signing ceremonies for conventions, treaties, protocols, and bilateral agreements, the OAS flag shall be placed to the right of the flag of the member state signing the instrument. The flags shall be of the same size and raised to the same height.
9. At cultural activities co-sponsored by member states and the OAS, the flag of the member state and, to its right, the OAS flag shall be flown.
10. When a head of state or government of a member country dies, the OAS flag shall fly at half mast at headquarters and at the office of the General Secretariat in that country. The flag shall remain at half mast for one day, which shall begin immediately when the Organization learns of the death of the head of state or government. If, because of inclement weather, the flag cannot be raised, it shall be flown at half mast on the day of the funeral. A flag that is to fly at half mast must first be raised to the top of the pole and then lowered to half mast.

When the flag of the Organization of American States covers a casket, it must not touch the ground or be lowered with the casket.

11. A complete set of flags of all the member states shall be placed permanently in the form of a fan at each end of the Hall of the Americas, alphabetically in Spanish, from left to right. They shall be placed at the center of the doors leading from the Hall of Americas to the Miranda Room and to the Columbus Room, at exactly the same height.

They shall also be displayed permanently in the entrance to the Main Building, divided into two semicircles, arranged in a similar order.

12. If a member state wishes to show support for the Organization of American States, it may raise the OAS flag on special occasions such as holidays, or an official event if it is held in honor of the Organization.

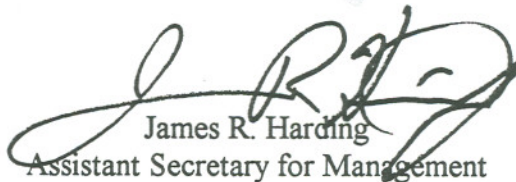
II. Derogations:

This administrative memorandum supersedes and replaces all contrary provisions, regulations, instructions, and practices of the General Secretariat.

III. Entry into Force:

This administrative memorandum shall enter into force on the date it is signed.

Date: February 17, 1998
Original: Spanish


James R. Harding
Assistant Secretary for Management

THE FLAG OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES

The flag of the Organization of American States was first used during the term of office of Secretary General José Antonio Mora. The flag consists of the seal of the Organization, which represents the flags of all the member states on a royal blue background. The seal with the flags was first seen on the Organization's stationary in the 1920s, when Leo S. Rowe was Director General.

The flag was commissioned from Annin & Co., New York, in April 1961. The color chosen for the background was royal blue: neither light nor dark blue. In the center are the flags of all the member countries arranged in an arc with 10 flagpoles at the bottom, framed by a circle.



The design was updated most recently in 1991, when Belize and Guyana became members of the Organization. Each time a new state joins, its flag is incorporated. The use of the flag has been established according to tradition and practice followed over the years in the Organization.