HOW LONG WILL YOUR FLAG LAST?

One of our most frequently asked questions is *How long can I expect my flag to last?*

Ewing is proud to supply high-quality flags. However, regardless of how well it is constructed and how high quality the fabric, a flag is a piece of cloth which is impacted by the elements and other factors. Therefore, the service life of your flag will depend on a number of factors. To get the longest service life out of your flag we provide the following information:

FLAGS INSTALLED INDOORS:

If the flag installed indoors and out of direct sunlight, you can expect a very long lifespan; 15+ years would not be unexpected, with proper regular inspections (see below). If it is installed inside but exposed to direct sunlight, you will likely need to replace it due to fading in 5+ years.

FLAGS HOISTED OUTSIDE:

Far more common, if you fly your flag outdoors, it is exposed to much more wear and tear. It will flap, shake, tremble, drape, snap, chafe, bake, freeze, ripple, flutter, furl, unfurl, twist, fly, strain, etc...

The service life of your outdoor flag will be impacted by:

1. LOCATION: The service life of your flag is impacted right from the start, when you are deciding where your flagpole and flag will be installed. Therefore, when selecting the exact location, factor in the following considerations:
   - To the extent the pole is sheltered from the elements (eg. periods of shade in the are vs continuous direct sunlight, winds, hail/rain/sleet) the service life is enhanced. If the flag will be fully exposed to harsh elements, the service life will decrease.
   - Ensure that your flag has adequate room to fly properly, without making contact with other objects, such as trees/branches, other flagpoles / flags, building / sheds /structures.

2. FLAG SELECTION: Although Ewing offers flags in both polyester and nylon fabric, if durability and long service life are your main concerns, we recommend high-quality polyester as it is stronger, more durable and overall weather resilient. Nylon, although the less expensive option, will not wear as well as polyester. Also, ensure you select a flag that is the correct size for your flagpole. A flag that is too large for the flagpole is not properly supported and therefore more susceptible to damage due to strong winds and other extreme weather conditions. Ewing's knowledgeable staff would be pleased to help you with your selection.
3. WEATHER: The elements, such as strong winds, hail, rain and sleet negatively impact the longevity of your flag. You can't control the weather, but, you can take practical steps to reduce the impact it has on your flag:
   - Consider lowering/unflagging at night. Flags lowered/ taken down overnight can last up to 4 times longer than those flown continuously.
   - Pay attention to the weather forecast, in particular, high winds and/or heavy rain, hail, sleet and snow all require action. Take down the flag when extreme weather conditions are forecast to prevent damage. In particular, when the forecast indicates winds exceeding 60 Km per hour, take the flag down; this step will also help to protect the stability of the flagpole.
4. AIR QUALITY / POLLUTION: Air pollution can stain and damage outdoor fabrics such as flags, causing discoloration, degradation and unpleasant odors. Research supports that exposure to pollutants (eg. sulfur oxides, nitrogen dioxide and ozone) can cause fading and discoloration and can accelerate degradation / deterioration of the fibers. Not only does the flag 'age' more quickly, but its tensile strength is also reduced making it more prone to tearing and other damage.

   Dust and soot from forest fires and other fires can also soil the flag, making them dirty or dull and potentially adding to the effects of other pollutants.

   Here are some tips to protect and preserve your flag against the impact of pollutants:

   - Pay attention to the news, including reports of poor air quality and events like large forest fires and local fires and act on this information and remove your flag if air quality is poor.

- Select a polyester flag. Different fabrics have varying degrees of susceptibility to the range of pollutants. Research supports that polyester is your best choice in this regard.
- Occasionally wash the flag; this will help to remove pollutants which can damage the flag fibers. Please see the cleaning instructions below.

CLEANING INSTRUCTIONS:

- Regularly clean the flag by wiping with a damp cloth to remove dirt and debris
- In Spring and Fall, or when the flag is soiled, or when you are going to store it, hand wash the flag with cold water and a mild detergent (that does not include bleach as an ingredient)
- Hang or spread out the flag in a shaded area and allow it to dry completely before rehoisting or storing. This will prevent colour transfer, fading /damage from the sun (during drying) and mold/mildew from forming on the flag during storage.

- Dry Thoroughly: Wash the flag before storing. After it has been washed It is important to let the flag dry thoroughly (as described above) before storing it.

5. DAY-TO-DAY WEAR AND TEAR:
   - Inspect your flag regularly, looking for any signs of wear. At the first sign of fraying, have your flag repaired before further damage occurs. This is a small cost that will extend the life of your flag. Larger flags should be inspected more frequently to ensure they are in good repair.
   - Purchase 2 flags and rotate them on a regular basis (at least every 2 months), so that one is flying and one is in storage at any time. Research supports that flag fibers benefit from being rested. See above for proper storage.
6. PROPER STORAGE: Rotating the flag, as discussed above is a great idea, but proper storage is critical. Fold the flag neatly; resist the temptation to scrunch or crumple the flag up. The flag can be folded like a sheet or in the traditional triangle shape to minimize creases. For long-term storage consider using a textile (archival) storage tube and roll the flag around the tube. Store the flag in a cool, dry, dark place to prevent light damage and mold and mildew.