

1 **Chapter 144.**

2 **State Flag, Official Governmental Flags, Motto, and Colors.**

3 **§ 144-1. State flag.**

4 The flag of North Carolina shall consist of a blue union, containing in the center thereof a  
5 white star with the letter "N" in gilt on the left and the letter "C" in gilt on the right of said star,  
6 the circle containing the same to be one third the width of said union. The fly of the flag shall  
7 consist of two equally proportioned bars, the upper bar to be red, the lower bar to be white; the  
8 length of the bars horizontally shall be equal to the perpendicular length of the union, and the  
9 total length of the flag shall be one half more than its width. Above the star in the center of the  
10 union there shall be a gilt scroll in semicircular form, containing in black letters this inscription:  
11 "May 20th 1775" and below the star there shall be a similar scroll containing in black letters the  
12 inscription: "April 12th 1776". (1885, c. 291; Rev., s. 5321; C.S., s. 7535; 1991, c. 361, s. 1.)  
13

14 **§ 144-2. State motto.**

15 The words "esse quam videri" are hereby adopted as the motto of this State, and as such  
16 shall be engraved on the great seal of North Carolina and likewise at the foot of the coat of  
17 arms of the State as a part thereof. On the coat of arms, in addition to the motto, at the bottom,  
18 there shall be inscribed at the top the words, "May 20th, 1775." (1893, c. 145; Rev., s. 5320;  
19 C.S., s. 7536.)  
20

21 **§ 144-3. Flags to be displayed on public buildings and institutions.**

22 The board of trustees or managers of the several State institutions and public buildings shall  
23 provide a North Carolina flag, of such dimensions and material as they may deem best, and the  
24 same shall be displayed from a staff upon the top of each and every such building, at all times  
25 except during inclement weather, and upon the death of any State officer or any prominent  
26 citizen the flag shall be put at half-staff until the burial of such person has taken place. (1907,  
27 c. 838, s. 2; C.S., s. 7537; 2009-570, s. 23.)  
28

29 **§ 144-4. Flags to be displayed at county courthouses.**

30 The boards of county commissioners of the several counties in this State shall likewise  
31 authorize the procuring of a North Carolina flag, to be displayed either on a staff upon the top  
32 or draped behind the judge's stand, in each and every courthouse in the State, and the State flag  
33 shall be displayed at each and every term of court held, and on such other public occasions as  
34 the commissioners may deem proper. (1907, c. 838, s. 3; C.S., s. 7538.)  
35

36 **§ 144-5. Flags to conform to law.**

37 No State flag shall be allowed in or over any building here mentioned unless such flag  
38 conforms to the description of the State flag contained in this chapter. (1907, c. 838, s. 4; C.S.,  
39 s. 7539.)  
40

41 **§ 144-6. State colors.**

42 Red and blue, of shades as adopted and appearing in the North Carolina State flag and the  
43 American flag, shall be, and hereby are, declared to be the official State colors for the State of  
44 North Carolina.

45 The use of such official State colors on ribbons attached to State documents with the great  
46 seal and/or seals of State departments is permissive and discretionary but not directory. (1945,  
47 c. 878.)  
48

49 **§ 144-7. Display of official governmental flags; public restrictions.**

1 (a) A county, city, consolidated city-county, or unified government shall not prohibit an  
2 official governmental flag from being flown or displayed if the official governmental flag is  
3 flown or displayed:

4 (1) In accordance with the patriotic customs set forth in 4 U.S.C. §§ 5-10, as  
5 amended; and

6 (2) Upon private or public property with the consent of either the owner of the  
7 property or of any person having lawful control of the property.

8 (b) Notwithstanding subsection (a) of this section, for the purpose of protecting the  
9 public health, safety, and welfare, reasonable restrictions on flag size, number of flags,  
10 location, and height of flagpoles are not prohibited, provided that such restrictions shall not  
11 discriminate against any official governmental flag in any manner.

12 (c) For purposes of this section, an "official governmental flag" shall mean any of the  
13 following:

14 (1) The flag of the United States of America.

15 (2) The flag of nations recognized by the United States of America.

16 (3) The flag of the State of North Carolina.

17 (4) The flag of any state or territory of the United States.

18 (5) The flag of a political subdivision of any state or territory of the United  
19 States. (2005-360, s. 1.)  
20

21 **§ 144-8. State salute to the North Carolina flag.**

22 The phrase "I salute the flag of North Carolina and pledge to the Old North State love,  
23 loyalty, and faith." is adopted as the official salute to the North Carolina flag. (2007-36, s. 1.)  
24

25 **§ 144-9. Retirement of State flag.**

26 An official flag of the State that is no longer a fitting emblem for display because it is worn,  
27 tattered, or otherwise damaged may be respectfully retired by fire. (2010-189, s. 1.)