

Notes for the Guidance of Rep DLs re Borough Observance of Mourning Following the Death of a Member of the Royal Family *[not including the Sovereign]*

The forms of Mourning are: NATIONAL MOURNING
 ROYAL MOURNING

Following the death of a Member of The Royal Family, the Lord Chamberlain or the Earl Marshal will consult with the Prime Minister before seeking The Sovereign's Commands with regard to mourning. No action should be taken until there is a formal announcement of the death (*that is, when the media reports that Buckingham Palace or Downing Street has announced the death, not when they indicate that "reports are coming in of the death of"*).

National Mourning

Observed by all, including national representatives serving abroad.
Flags lowered from the day of death to the day of Funeral.
Business/Sporting activities considered by Prime Minister's Office.

Royal Mourning

Observed by Members of the Royal Family, Households of the Royal Family and Troops on Public Duties.

Flags

Flags should be flown at half-mast on the day the death is announced (or immediately following) and day of Funeral. Flags also lowered on any other occasions where Her Majesty has given special command.

Half-mast means the flag is flown two-thirds of the way up the flagpole with at least the height of the flag between the top of the flag and the top of the flagpole. On flag poles that are more than 45° from the vertical, flags cannot be flown at half-mast and the pole should be left empty.

When a flag is to be flown at half-mast it should first be raised all the way to the top of the mast, allowed to remain there for a second and then lowered to the half-mast position. When it is to be lowered from half-mast it should again be raised to the top of the mast for a second before being fully lowered. When the national flag is at half-mast other flags should also be at half-mast or should not be flown at all. Flags of foreign nations should not be flown unless their country is also observing mourning.

Unless the flag pole is illuminated by a spotlight or similar lighting, the flag should be raised each morning at 8.00 a.m. and taken down at sunset.

The Lord Chamberlain's Department, through the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and through the National Executives, issues a list of Flag Flying Days. If a Flag Flying Day occurs on a day when flags are to fly at half-mast, the flag should still be flown at half-mast.

Observance by Members of the Royal Family, Royal Households and Representatives

- | | | | |
|----|-----------|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| a. | Dress | Uniform: | Mourning Bands |
| | | Civilian Dress | Dark colours |
| b. | Functions | Official engagements may be fulfilled | |
| | | Social engagements are cancelled | |

Stationery

Black-edged stationery should be used for all significant announcements about the death of a Member of the Royal Family and for external communications about subsequent arrangements. Mourning stationery need not be used for other correspondence.

National Mourning

On all occasions of public mourning, the head of the mace should be draped in black or a black bow tied around the shaft. This should apply both when the mace is in use and when it is on public display (for example, in a glass display cabinet).

On the day of the death and on the day of the funeral and on days between when public mourning is observed thought should be given to the way in which the Chain of Office is worn. Practice varies. For instance: a small black bag or purse can be fitted over the jewel so that only the chain is seen; or the badge can worn on a black ribbon; also, it may be apt for the civic car not to fly its civic pennant.

Members of the Council, when robed, should wear a small black rosette on the left lapel of the robe. Alternatively, when not robed, a black armband three and a quarter inches wide should be worn on the left arm and male members and officers should wear black ties.

Civic Engagements during periods of National Mourning

Careful thought should be given to the types of engagement undertaken, especially on the day of the announcement of a death and on the day of the funeral. This is particularly the case when hospitality is being offered in the form of receptions, lunches and dinners. The decision is a local one and should reflect local circumstances and the public mood.

Opening Books of Condolence

The decision on whether or not to open Books of Condolence is entirely for the local authority to decide. Such books can provide a helpful opportunity for people to express sadness but it is a decision to be taken locally on whether or not it is appropriate.

A loose-leaf book is suggested in case pages become spoilt, in which case they can be easily removed without affecting contributions made by others. It also enables the pages to be re-ordered so that the first pages can carry the messages and signatures of the local Mayor and other civic leaders, even if they cannot be present when the book of condolence is opened.

Closing Books of Condolence

Dependant on local circumstances it is suggested that Books of Condolence should be closed at the end of the day following the day of the funeral (i.e. if the funeral falls on a Thursday, Books should close at 5.00 p.m. on the Friday).

Such Books of Condolence are essentially a local record of the sentiments expressed by local people on the death of a national figure. As such, they should form part of the Authority's archive, so that future generations are able easily to gain access to them and find out the way in which national events were marked in the area. It is simply not feasible for every Book from all such sad occasions to form part of the Royal Archives. However, in any letter of condolence from the Mayor or other Civic Leader reference should be made to the Book of Condolence and its existence in the local archives which then ensures that when that letter goes in to the Royal Archives it acts as an effective cross reference.

Two Minute Silence

There will be an announcement through the Government if a death is to be marked by a National Two Minute Silence. The deaths of both George VI and Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother were marked by a national Two Minute Silence on the days of their funerals.

Letters of Condolence

It is usual for letters to be sent to the Private Secretary of the deceased, asking that condolences be passed to the next of kin and other members of the family (except in the case of the Sovereign's death, in which case they should be sent to the new Sovereign's Private Secretary asking that condolences be passed to the new Sovereign). In each case, other than exceptional local circumstances, one letter of condolence only should be sent.

Church Services

Following the death of Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother and of Diana, Princess of Wales, some Authorities organised Church Services. Again, local circumstances should be considered in deciding whether such a course is appropriate. If it is considered desirable then the evening before the funeral seems a fitting time at which to gather for this purpose.

Other Actions

It will sometimes be the case that Authorities have an opportunity to mark the death in an appropriate and unique way. For instance, on the day of the funeral of Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother, the route taken by the hearse from Westminster Abbey to Windsor Castle passed through seven boroughs. Just 24 hours beforehand, each of the seven borough agreed to mark the route by positioning their Mayor and Representative Deputy Lieutenant at the point at which the procession entered the borough and their Deputy Mayor and Council Leader at the point at which it left the borough. By this simple act, the seven Councils demonstrated their sadness, loyalty and affection whilst affording a focal point around which local people could gather.