

# THE EMBLEMS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

## The Coat of Arms

The Coat of Arms of British Columbia is one of the most important elements of the province's visual heritage. Since its initial creation by Canon Arthur Beanlands and its being granted by Royal Warrant of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 1987, the Coat of Arms of British Columbia has been symbolic of the sovereignty, the supreme power and the authority of the Province to create and enforce laws so as to govern itself. It also serves to define B.C.'s co-sovereign status as a province of Canada.



The Coat of Arms of British Columbia is reserved for use by the three branches of government only: the Executive branch (Lieutenant Governor, Premier and Cabinet), the Legislative branch (Members of the Legislative Assembly elected by the citizens of British Columbia) and the Judicial branch (the Provincial and Supreme Courts of British Columbia and the British Columbia Court of Appeal). The Coat of Arms can be affixed to provincial possessions like court houses, public schools and government office buildings; and can be stamped, printed or engraved upon documents, certificates and proclamations issued by any of the three branches of government. The Coat of Arms does not represent the public service division of government.

Heraldry and coats of arms were developed in the 12<sup>th</sup> century to serve a purpose on the Medieval battlefield similar to the purpose present-day sporting uniforms play: they helped participants and spectators quickly recognize the allies and the opposition. Because very few people in Medieval times knew how to read and write, heraldic arms

were adapted to embossed emblems or seals so that the owner of the emblem could authenticate documents written in their name.

Below is a description of the symbolism within the provincial Coat of Arms:<sup>1</sup>

- **Arms** – The Royal Union Flag, with an antique crown in the centre, symbolizes the province's origin as a British colony. The three wavy blue bars represent the Pacific Ocean. The sun signifies British Columbia's location as the most westerly province in Canada.
- **Crest** – The crowned lion – the Royal Crest of the United Kingdom – was used as the emblem of the province for many years. The lion is differenced by a garland of Pacific dogwoods, the provincial flower, around its neck.
- **Supporters** – A wapiti stag and a bighorn sheep represent the colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia. Together they represent the colonies' union in 1866. They stand on a compartment of the provincial flower, the Pacific dogwood.
- **Motto** – *Splendor sine occasu*, this Latin phrase means "Splendour without diminishment". The motto refers to the sun on the shield, which, although setting, never decreases.

The symbolism apparent in the province's Coat of Arms is central to the other visual emblems that the province employs to reinforce its sovereignty: the provincial Shield, Great Seal and flag.

<sup>1</sup> Canadian Heraldic Authority, "The Province of British Columbia, Registration of Arms and Flag." GG.ca. <http://reg.gg.ca/heraldry/pub-reg/project.asp?lang=e&ProjectID=1406&ShowAll=1> (accessed June 29, 2017).



## The Shield of British Columbia

The central Arms, or Shield, within the Coat of Arms is reserved for use by the three branches of government as well as Crown advisory boards and tribunals.

Independent authorities, statutory offices and self-regulating bodies constituted by and authorized to enact provincial legislation can also use the Shield of British Columbia.

## The Great Seal



The Great Seal of British Columbia has both an administrative and ceremonial purpose. It is stamped, printed or engraved upon provincial government documents, certificates and proclamations issued by the three branches of government to authenticate them and make them official. Similar to the Great Seal of Canada, the

Great Seal of British Columbia signifies the power and authority of the Crown flowing from the sovereign to our parliamentary government. The Great Seal should never be used to identify the province or government on any government publication, marketing material, promotional item, advertising campaign or website.

*Because the use of the Coat of Arms, Shield and the Great Seal are restricted by law, digital reproduction files are not available to download. Please direct requests to use these symbols to the Government of British Columbia's Office of Protocol at [protocol@gov.bc.ca](mailto:protocol@gov.bc.ca)*

## The Flag of British Columbia



Any resident or corporation of British Columbia can proudly fly the province's distinctive flag. The flag's use is not governed by legislation but rather by convention and the dignity that should be afforded to all of the province's symbols. Always fly the flag on its own mast. The flag may be flown both night and day. When displayed with the National Flag and a municipal flag, the National Flag should be centred with the flag of British Columbia on

its left and the municipal flag on its right to an observer facing the flags<sup>2</sup>. When flown at gatherings of the federation, the flags should be arranged in the order of the date each province or territory entered Confederation with the National Flag flown on the extreme left. The provincial flag should never be used as a tablecloth, carpet or seat cover, but instead be hung in a place of honour. When the flag is tattered or its colours faded, it should be retired in a dignified manner and replaced with a new provincial flag.

*While the flag of British Columbia is protected by Crown copyright, digital artwork files are available to download. Please ensure these digital artwork files are always used as they are provided. This includes not altering the aspect ratio of the flag, using part of the flag or adjusting the image in any way. Questions can be directed to the Office of Protocol at [protocol@gov.bc.ca](mailto:protocol@gov.bc.ca)*

<sup>2</sup> British Columbia Office of Protocol, "Flag Placement." GOV.bc.ca. <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/organizational-structure/office-of-the-premier/intergovernmental-relations-secretariat/protocol/flags/placement> (accessed June 29, 2017).

## Reproducing the Coat of Arms and Shield

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There are three main versions of the provincial Coat of Arms. The emblem can be reproduced by itself **[A]** or with the province's name in either English **[B]** or French **[C]**.

The minimum height the Coat of Arms can be reproduced in print is 0.75 inches **[D]** and the minimum height the Shield should be reproduced in print is 0.5 inches **[E]**.

Care must be taken when reproducing the Coat of Arms, especially in one colour settings **[F]**. When used in reverse situations (light image on a dark background **[G]**), the Shield retains the white areas of the *Union Flag* against the dark background. The *wavy bars* alternate light and dark starting with light at the top. The *sun and rays* should always be light.



**[A]**



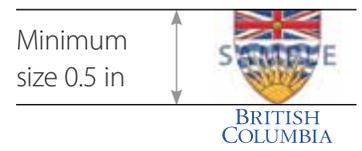
**[B]**



**[C]**



**[D]**



**[E]**



**[F]**



**[G]**

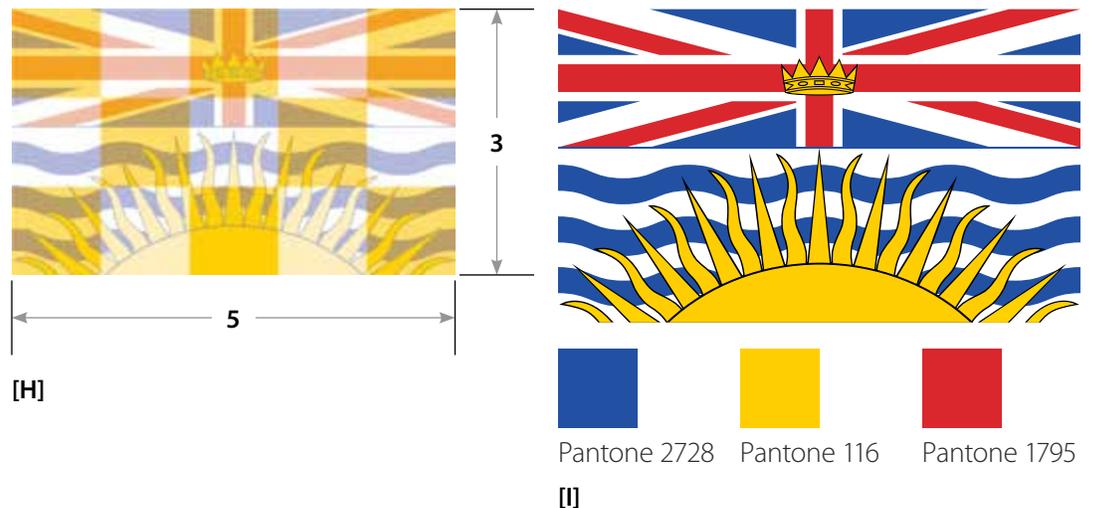
## Reproducing the flag of British Columbia

While the flag of British Columbia protected by Crown copyright, digital artwork files are available for the public and flag manufacturers to download. Please ensure these digital artwork files are always used as they are provided and never altered. This includes not altering the aspect ratio of the flag, using part of the flag or adjusting the image in any way. Questions can be directed to the B.C. Office of Protocol at [protocol@gov.bc.ca](mailto:protocol@gov.bc.ca)

The province's distinctive flag was confirmed by provincial order-in-council in 1960 and then registered in the Public Register of Arms, Flags and Badges of Canada by the Canadian Heraldic Authority on April 17, 1990.

The aspect ratio (or proportions) of the flag are 5 units wide by 3 units high [H]. There are four print colours on a white ground: yellow Pantone 116c; red Pantone 1795c; blue Pantone 2728c and black [I]. While there is no printed border, a decorative gold fringe can be added around the flag's edge [J]. There is no symbolic significance to a gold fringe.

The province's flag is not symmetrical. Always fly the flag with the side that has the wider white diagonal stripes above the red diagonal stripes nearest the flagpole [K]. Complete protocol regarding the province's flag can be found at [the Office of Protocol's website](#).



[J] Gold fringe



[K] Wider white stripe above red stripe nearest the flagpole