

**Chapter 9.86 RCW  
FLAGS, CRIMES RELATING TO**

**Sections**

- 9.86.010 "Flag," etc., defined.
- 9.86.020 Improper use of flag prohibited.
- 9.86.030 Desecration of flag.
- 9.86.040 Application of provisions.

*Display of flags: RCW 1.20.015.*

*Flag exercises in schools: RCW 28A.230.140.*

*State flag: RCW 1.20.010.*

**RCW 9.86.010 "Flag," etc., defined.** The words flag, standard, color, ensign or shield, as used in this chapter, shall include any flag, standard, color, ensign or shield, or copy, picture or representation thereof, made of any substance or represented or produced thereon, and of any size, evidently purporting to be such flag, standard, color, ensign or shield of the United States or of this state, or a copy, picture or representation thereof. [1919 c 107 s 1; RRS s 2675-1.]

**RCW 9.86.020 Improper use of flag prohibited.** (1) No person shall, in any manner, for exhibition or display:

(a) Place or cause to be placed any word, figure, mark, picture, design, drawing or advertisement of any nature upon any flag, standard, color, ensign or shield of the United States or of this state, or authorized by any law of the United States or of this state; or

(b) Expose to public view any such flag, standard, color, ensign or shield upon which shall have been printed, painted or otherwise produced, or to which shall have been attached, appended, affixed or annexed any such word, figure, mark, picture, design, drawing or advertisement; or

(c) Expose to public view for sale, manufacture, or otherwise, or to sell, give, or have in possession for sale, for gift or for use for any purpose, any substance, being an article of merchandise, or receptacle, or thing for holding or carrying merchandise, upon or to which shall have been produced or attached any such flag, standard, color, ensign or shield, in order to advertise, call attention to, decorate, mark or distinguish such article or substance.

(2) A violation of this section is a gross misdemeanor. [2003 c 53 s 47; 1919 c 107 s 2; 1909 c 249 s 423; 1901 c 154 s 1; RRS s 2675-2.]

**Intent—Effective date—2003 c 53:** See notes following RCW 2.48.180.

**RCW 9.86.030 Desecration of flag.** (1) No person shall knowingly cast contempt upon any flag, standard, color, ensign or shield, as defined in RCW 9.86.010, by publicly mutilating, defacing, defiling,

burning, or trampling upon the flag, standard, color, ensign or shield.

(2) A violation of this section is a gross misdemeanor. [2003 c 53 s 48; 1969 ex.s. c 110 s 1; 1919 c 107 s 3; 1909 c 249 s 423; RRS s 2675-3.]

**Intent—Effective date—2003 c 53:** See notes following RCW 2.48.180.

**RCW 9.86.040 Application of provisions.** This chapter shall not apply to any act permitted by the statutes of the United States or of this state, or by the United States army and navy regulations, nor shall it apply to any printed or written document or production, stationery, ornament, picture or jewelry whereon shall be depicted said flag, standard, color, ensign or shield with no design or words thereon and disconnected with any advertisement. [1919 c 107 s 4; RRS s 2675-4.]