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## Corpn axes 2 staff for keeping tricolour aloft after dark

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CHENNAI: Mayor M Subramanian on Thursday suspended two corporation employees, including a junior assistant for not lowering the National Flag at the Chennai Corporation's zonal office on Tiruvottiyur High Road. The flag should have been lowered at 6pm, as per the norms.

Acting on a news report published in a Tamil daily, Subramanian conducted an inquiry and found the assistants, who were in charge of hoisting and lowering the flag failed to execute their duties on Wednesday. According to the rules, the tricolour has to be flown in public buildings from sunrise to sunset irrespective of weather conditions. They may be kept aloft at night only on very special occasions.

"The suspension should set an example for others. Everyone should know the value of the National tricolour and have the responsibility of upholding its sanctity," Subramanian told TOI. For Stalin and Manimaran, the junior assistant and office assistant with the zonal office, it was their turn duty that cost them dearly. A night watchman who is responsible for the flag hoisting and lowering was on leave on Wednesday.

On getting the zonal office's report, the civic administration

immediately placed the staff under suspension. Soon, the latter will be served with suspension orders with charges framed.

"They will be given time to explain officially. It may take months before being sent to the appointment committee and elected council for the final decision," a senior corporation official said. In certain cases, the commissioner has the powers to decide on the suspension.

Due to lack of awareness about the National Flag rules not only among the public, but also in the government, the Union home ministry in 2002 came out with the Flag Code of India. "When there is a rule, it has to be complied with," M G Devasahayam, a former bureacrat and managing trustee of SUSTAIN, an NGO, said.