

DEPARTMENT AWARDS

The purpose of this order is to define formal Department awards given to sworn officers, establish criteria for meriting awards, and outline procedures by which awards are processed.

I. POLICY

A. TYPES OF AWARDS

1. MEDAL OF VALOR. There are three types of medals of valor:
 - a. GOLD MEDAL OF VALOR. The Department's highest award for valor is merited when the following elements exist:
 - Outstanding bravery above and beyond that expected in the line of duty.
 - Where failure to take such action would not justify censure.
 - Where risk of life actually existed and the officer had sufficient time to evaluate that risk.
 - Where the objective is of sufficient importance to justify the risk.
 - Where the officer accomplished the objective or was prevented from accomplishing the objective by incurring a disabling injury or death.
 - b. SILVER MEDAL OF VALOR. The Department's second highest award for valor is merited when the following elements exist:
 - Where the officer manifests outstanding bravery in the performance of duty under circumstances not within the provisions required for a Gold Medal of Valor.
 - Where the officer risks his or her life with full and unquestionable knowledge of the danger involved, or where a reasonable person would assume his or her life was in great danger.

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- Where the objective is of sufficient importance to justify the risk.
 - Where the officer accomplished the objective, or was prevented from accomplishing the objective by circumstances beyond his or her control.
- c. BRONZE MEDAL OF VALOR. The Department's third highest award for valor is the Bronze Medal of Valor. The members of the Awards Committee shall evaluate the objective, the risk, and the degree of danger, and determine by their vote whether a silver or bronze medal of valor shall be granted.
2. MERITORIOUS CONDUCT AWARD. The Meritorious Conduct Award is merited by making an investigation and arrest in a serious felony case when it is shown that the arrest was made possible by diligent and painstaking research on the part of the officer, and it clearly appears that the officer correctly weighed and evaluated all the clues and circumstances at his/her disposal. This award does not consider arrests made solely on the information of an informant.
3. LIFE SAVING AWARD. The Awards Committee may confer this award after review when the following criteria are met:
- a. A member directly intervenes in a medical emergency by administering first aid.
 - b. The intervention directly resulted in the saving of the victim's life.
4. PURPLE HEART AWARD.
- a. The Awards Committee may award a Purple Heart to a member of the Department who is wounded or receives a serious injury while on or off duty in an incident within the course and scope of police-related functions and/or responsibilities.
 - b. In determining whether to grant a Purple Heart Award, the Committee must consider all of the circumstances, but primarily the degree of injury and factual situation facing the officer during the incident.
- The injury or wound must have caused a serious impairment of physical condition requiring professional medical treatment, including but not limited to loss of consciousness, concussion, bone fracture, protracted loss of any bodily function or organ, extensive suturing and/ or serious disfigurement.

- The officer must have sustained the injury as a direct or indirect result of action that the officer believed necessary to prevent the loss of life or serious injury to civilians or other officers, and that falls within the parameters of all Department rules and regulations.
- The Award Committee should avoid granting this award based on questionable situations that might dilute the Award's importance.
- c. The Awards Screen Committee shall submit their recommendations to the full Awards Committee for final disposition. The Awards Committee may determine what, if any, compensation should be considered for the recipient(s) of a Purple Heart Award.
- d. The Awards Committee is not precluded from awarding any other medal of valor that the Awards Committee believes is justified to an officer who is awarded a Purple Heart.

5 POLICE COMMISSION COMMENDATION. The Police Commission may grant this commendation to members for acts done in the performance of their duties. The Awards Committee may also grant this commendation for noteworthy acts which, in their judgement, do not fall within the criteria of the Medal of Valor or the Meritorious Conduct Award.

6. UNIT CITATION AWARD. The Unit Citation Award may be conferred for outstanding performance by an organizational unit of the Department. The accomplishment must be the result of combined efforts by members of the unit. The Chief of Police will confer the award after his/her review of the nomination.

7. CAPTAIN'S COMPLIMENTARY REPORT. This report will be merited by a member who performs his/her duty in a manner showing dedication and service above that normally demanded by the Department, but not meeting the qualifications necessary for a Medal of Valor, Meritorious Conduct Award, Police Commission Commendation, Life Saving Award or Unit Citation. The member's commanding officer may make a complimentary report of the incident to the Chief of Police. After approval by the Chief, the report shall become a part of the member's permanent personnel record.

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B. NOMINATING RULES

1. **TIME LIMIT.** Except when specifically exempted by the Chief of Police, nominations for Medal of Valor, Meritorious Conduct Award or Life Saving Award must be submitted no later than 60 days after the occurrence of the action for which the application has been made.
2. **BY WHOM.** Any supervisory officer who considers an action by a member deserving of an award may nominate the member. Members may also nominate themselves.
- C. **REWARD.** The Police Commission may reward any member for valor or meritorious conduct. The form or amount of reward shall be discretionary, but must not exceed the member's monthly salary.
- D. **SUCCESSIVE AWARDS.** Successive awards for Medals of Valor, Meritorious Conduct, Police Commission Commendation, Life Saving and Unit Citation shall be accompanied by bronze stars placed on the ribbon. A silver star shall signify 5 awards of the same type, and a gold star 10 or more.

E. AWARDS SCREENING COMMITTEE

1. **COMPOSITION.** The Awards Screening Committee shall be comprised of 3 captains serving a term of 6 months. The senior captain shall serve as the Chair.
2. **TERMS.** At the end of their terms, the members of the Awards Screening Committee shall be replaced by the next three senior captains not serving in exempt positions.
3. **ROTATION.** When all captains have had an opportunity to serve on the Awards Screening Committee, selection shall resume at the top of the seniority list.
4. **CONSENSUS.** A majority of the members on the Awards Screening Committee must agree to refer the nomination to the Awards Committee. A nomination denied by the Awards Screening Committee will be heard by the Awards Committee only with the personal approval of the Chief of Police.

F. AWARDS COMMITTEE

1. **COMPOSITION.** The Awards Committee shall consist of the following:
 - a. One member of the Police Commission acting as the Chair. In his or her absence, the committee members present shall elect the Chair for that particular meeting.

- b. All police captains. Captains granted leaves of absence to accept appointed positions within the Department shall remain members of the committee.
 - c. The Secretary of the Police Commission shall serve as the Secretary.
2. RULES. The Awards Committee shall be governed by the following rules:
- a. Six members shall constitute a quorum.
 - b. Applications shall be heard and voted upon separately; however, if two or more members are nominated for awards resulting from joint actions, their applications may be heard and voted upon at the same time.
 - c. A member of the Awards Committee who makes an application on behalf of a member may participate in the hearing and be a witness, but cannot vote on that application.
 - d. Two-thirds of the members must agree upon a specific grade of award. Votes that were cast for a higher-grade award but did not total a two-thirds' majority will be applied to the next lower grade of award until a two-thirds' majority is reached. The Meritorious Conduct Award shall be voted as a single grade.
 - e. Voting shall be made by secret ballot unless waived by unanimous approval of the members present.
 - f. All applications approved by the Awards Committee shall be forwarded to the Chief of Police for his/her approval.
- G. POLICE COMMISSION APPROVAL. The Police Commission shall exercise independent judgement and may re-investigate a nomination when considering the Medal of Valor or the Meritorious Conduct Award. The approval or disapproval by the Awards Committee or the Chief of Police shall not be binding on the Commission. The Medal of Valor or the Meritorious Conduct Award shall not be awarded until approved by the Commission.

II. PROCEDURES

A. NOMINATION PROCESS

1. **NOMINATION/MEMORANDUM.** The nomination must be submitted on a memorandum forwarded to the member's commanding officer. It must describe in detail the actions of the member, showing how those actions come within the criteria established by this order. Supporting documentation (e.g., letter from paramedics, medical records) is required to nominate a member for the Life Saving Award.
2. **REVIEW.** The member's commanding officer will review the nomination and conduct a personal investigation to determine if the award is warranted. If not, it shall be returned to the nominating member with the reasons for rejection.
3. **C.O. MEMORANDUM.** If the commanding officer approves the nomination, he/she shall prepare a memorandum to the Chief of Police requesting the type of award. The memorandum should summarize the member's actions and the reason those actions come within the criteria set forth in this order.
4. **FORWARDING.** The commanding officer shall send the nomination package (nomination, memoranda and any supporting documents) to the Chief of Police who will forward it to the Commission Office for screening procedures.
5. **UNIT CITATION AWARD.** A nomination for the Unit Citation Award shall be submitted on a memorandum forwarded to the member's commanding officer. The memorandum shall contain a detailed description of the unit's accomplishment and show how it affected the Department. The commanding officer shall forward the memorandum to the appropriate deputy chief, who will submit it to the Chief of Police for review. After reviewing and approving the nomination, the Chief of Police shall confer the award.

B. SCREENING PROCESS. The Commission Office shall send all nomination packages to the Awards Screening Committee which will review them and take one of the following actions:

1. Approve and return the nomination package to the Commission Office.
2. Return the nomination package to the commanding officer for further investigation.
3. Deny the nomination.

C. AWARDS COMMITTEE HEARING

1. **PACKAGE.** After receipt of approved applications, the Secretary of the Awards Committee will send a copy of each nomination package to every captain at least 14 days before the hearing. The Secretary will also set a date for the hearing on the first month of each quarter, or sooner if warranted, and notify each captain and the nominated member of the date at least 7 days prior to the hearing.
 2. **SUMMARY.** At the awards hearing, the Secretary of the Awards Committee will read the commanding officer's summary of the application in the presence of the nominated member.
 3. **WITNESSES.** The Awards Committee may also call and examine witnesses regarding matters to be heard and determined.
 4. **DISCUSSION.** The nominated member shall leave the hearing room while the committee discusses the matter and votes on it.
- D. POST-HEARING PROCEDURES.** The Chief of Police shall forward the approved nominations to the Police Commission, indicating his/her approval or disapproval.
- E. SUPPLY.** The Office of the Police Commission shall maintain a supply of medals and ribbons.
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