



Subject:

820. Awards

Approved:

Chief Marcia Harnden

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Page:

1

820.1: PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides a uniform means of recognizing actions or performance by Albany Police Department members and community members that are either outstanding or beyond that which is normally expected.

820.2: POLICY

It is the policy of the Albany Police Department (APD) to recognize APD members and community members for acts of distinguished service or outstanding individual achievement. While the highest level of professional conduct is expected of all members, this policy provides guidelines for the recognition of exemplary acts exceeding the highest standards of conduct and bringing honor to themselves and the department.

820.3: AWARDS

820.3.1: AWARDS FOR VALOR

a. **Medal of Honor** – The highest award that may be bestowed upon an individual. The Medal of Honor will be awarded to an individual who voluntarily distinguishes themselves conspicuously by gallantry and extraordinary heroism at the risk of their lives above and beyond the call of duty. The act must be performed at such self-risk as to clearly distinguish the individual from others and, if not performed, would not subject the individual to any justified criticism. This award is the highest and most prestigious department award, and there must be no margin of doubt or possibility of error in awarding this honor. A posthumous award may be given to a member who has lost their life under conditions where they endangered themselves in circumstances consistent with good police practices.

b. **Medal of Valor** – The Medal of Valor will be awarded to an individual distinguished by an act of extraordinary heroism. To warrant this award, the act must be performed in the presence of great danger or at great personal risk and by its nature involve the saving of a human life, the attempted saving of a human life, the prevention of a serious crime, or the apprehension of a person who committed a serious crime. The action must be performed in such a manner as to render the individual highly conspicuous.

- c. **Purple Heart** – The Purple Heart will be awarded to an individual who is killed or suffers serious physical injury while performing a heroic and/or police action in an official capacity. This award will be limited to those cases resulting from attack by an assailant, personal combat, or the performance of an act of valor. A posthumous award may be made to a member. The Purple Heart may be awarded with other awards for the same act.
- d. **Lifesaving with Valor Award** – The Lifesaving with Valor Award will be awarded to an individual who distinguishes themselves by performing an act of heroism, while demonstrating good judgment, to preserve the life of another. The act must involve the successful saving of the life of another person, the strong possibility the person would have died, the recipient's actions prevented the loss of life, and an imminent threat to the safety of the recipient.

820.3.2: AWARDS FOR MERIT AND ACHIEVEMENT

- a. **Police STAR (Superior Tactics and Response)** – The Police Star will be awarded to an individual who, through exceptional tactics, acts to successfully resolve an incident, thereby promoting a culture of safety and professionalism to which all officers should aspire. The tactics displayed or performed must be conspicuously effective and above the standard expected. Exceptional tactics include utilization of proper tactics and appropriate force which mitigated the level of danger and which were directly responsible for preventing the incident from escalating to a deadly force situation or other critical incident.
- b. **Lifesaving Merit Award** – The Lifesaving Merit Award will be awarded to an individual who performs a physical act that saves the life of another person or is otherwise instrumental in the saving of a life of another person and there is no danger to the recipient. The act must involve the successful saving of a life of another person, the strong possibility the person would have died, and the recipient's actions prevented the loss of life.
- c. **Distinguished Service Award** – The Distinguished Service Award will be awarded to an individual who distinguishes themselves with exceptional meritorious service. The award may be awarded to recipients who, through personal initiative, tenacity, and great effort, act to solve a major crime or series of crimes or who develops a program or plan which contributes significantly to the department's objectives and goals.
- d. **Public Service Award** – The Public Service Award will be awarded to an individual for an act or acts that went above and beyond assigned duties or responsibilities meriting greater recognition than a Department Coin or Letter of Commendation but not sufficient to merit the Distinguished Service Award. The criteria to consider for this award are:
 - 1) The recipient's act brought great credit to the department and the profession.
 - 2) During a long-term assignment, the recipient performed in an exemplary manner.
 - 3) The recipient made a significant contribution to the development of programs, policies, or procedures that had a substantial and positive impact on the goals and objectives of the department.

- 4) The recipient conducted an investigation, made an arrest, or solved a neighborhood problem that had a marked impact on the community.
- 5) The recipient distinguished themselves by highly commendable or unusual acts using good judgment.

820.3.3: AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

- a. **Department Employees of the Year** – Recognition of an Operations Division, Support Division, and Supervisor of the Year who, throughout the year, have consistently displayed exceptional work performance, professionalism, and/or customer service.
- b. **Division Employee of the Quarter** – Recognition of a member who throughout the quarter displays exceptional work performance, professionalism and/or customer service.
- c. **Letter of Commendation** – Recognition of outstanding performance member on police operations, projects, programs, or situations requiring exceptional service.
- d. **Department Coins** – See Section 820.9.

820.4: AWARDS COMMITTEE

- a. The Awards Committee will consist of a variety of employees from different departments, work groups, civilian status, and leadership levels. The variety of employees will create a diverse group to represent the department's workforce demographics.
- b. An awards committee chair shall be appointed by the Chief of Police. The chair presides over the committee and only votes in the event of a tie.
- c. The awards committee shall consist of at least seven members and not more than ten members.
- d. Six members of the committee shall constitute a quorum in order to make decisions on award recommendations.
- e. The awards committee shall review and make a recommendation for award nominations within 30 days of submission if practical.
- f. The awards committee should meet in person at least annually. In-person meetings shall be approved by a captain for overtime considerations.
- g. The awards committee shall use electronic means such as Guardian Tracking or Microsoft Teams to process award nominations in a timely manner.

820.5: NOMINATIONS

Any member may nominate another member or community member for award consideration. The nomination process shall follow these procedures:

- a. The written nomination should include a detailed description of the incident or service provided, any supporting documentation, and an explanation of how this meets the criteria of the award.
- b. The nomination will be submitted through Guardian to the Awards Committee.
- c. The Awards Committee Chair will forward the nomination to the Awards Committee or to the appropriate Captain for review.
- d. The Awards Committee or Captain will make a recommendation to the Chief of Police. The Chief of Police may then act on that recommendation.
- e. The Awards Committee may review awards presented to a member by other law enforcement agencies or other groups to determine if the incident or service met the criteria of this policy. The committee may then make a recommendation to the Chief of Police.
- f. The nomination for a Letter of Commendation can be submitted by any supervisor through Guardian Tracking via their chain of command to their Division Captain. The Captain over that Division approves the award.
- g. Each quarter, the Awards Committee chair will solicit nominations for Division Employees of the Quarter. The captain of each division will select the Employee of the Quarter for their division from the submitted nominations.
- h. At the conclusion of the year, the Awards Committee Chair will solicit nominations from all department members for Employee of the Year and Supervisor of the Year Awards. The Awards Committee will select a Support Division Employee of the Year, Operations Division Employee of the Year, and Supervisor of the Year from the nominations.
 - 1) Supervisors are not eligible to be the recipient of the Operations or Support Division Employee of the Quarter/Year.

820.6: PRESENTATION

- a. The formal presentation of awards will normally be during a City Council meeting in May of each year for Awards for Valor, Awards for Merit, Employees of the Year, and Supervisor of the Year.
 - 1) The citation for the incident or service will be read and the appropriate plaque and/or medal will be awarded.
 - 2) The recipient may request that a different forum (department meeting, briefing, private, etc.) be used for the Medal and/or Award presentation.
- b. To facilitate timely pre-recognition of awards, Letters of Commendation will normally be presented in a briefing or meeting setting by the Chief or the Captain assigned to that Division.

820.7: RIBBONS, MEDALS, AND PLAQUES

- a. Recipients of Medal of Honor, Medal of Valor, Purple Heart, Lifesaving with Valor, Police STAR, Distinguished Service, and Lifesaving Merit shall receive a commemorative plaque, medal, and ribbon.
 - 1) Ribbons may be worn on the uniform shirt centered and directly above the name tag.
- b. Recipients of Public Service Award, Employees of the Year, Supervisor of the Year, and Employees of the Quarter shall receive a commemorative plaque.

820.8: HALL OF HONOR

The Hall of Honor is located in the main hallway in the police department. The Hall of Honor displays historical plaques honoring award recipients. Plaques in the Hall of Honor include Medal of Honor, Medal of Valor, Purple Heart, Lifesaving with Valor, Police STAR, Lifesaving Merit, Distinguished Service, Employees of the Year, Supervisor of the Year, and Employees of the Quarter. Additional plaques include Albany Police Association executive board positions, American Legion policeman of the year, and SAC chamber of commerce award.

820.9: DEPARTMENT COIN

The Albany Police Department Coin provides Department leaders an effective means to recognize personnel for exceptional service and achievement in meeting the Department mission and/or exceptionally reflecting our Vision and Values.

- a. Actions that significantly further the efficiency or effectiveness of the City of Albany Police Department, well above and beyond performance of routine duties, may warrant Department Coin presentation.
- b. The Department Coin is designed to significantly contribute to the esprit de corps, pride, morale, and cohesion of our department.
- c. The Chief of Police and Captains possess the authority to award Department Coins, except Captains will not present to another Captain or the Chief.
 - 1) Department Coin presentation will be based on the consensus of the command staff and does not require Awards Committee action.
 - 2) Command staff may elect to present the Department Coin to deserving community members or members of other local, state, or federal agencies to acknowledge exceptional service and achievement that significantly assist in meeting the Albany Police Department Mission.
- d. The Department Coin presentation will be decided by Command staff and will be uniquely personal in its presentation. The recipient of this award shall receive the Department Coin and a certificate signed by the Chief of Police.