



## Policy 1712

Subject	
<b>DEPARTMENTAL AWARDS AND COMMENDATIONS</b>	
Date Published	Page
<b>2 August 2021</b>	<b>1 of 11</b>

*By Order of the Police Commissioner*

### **POLICY**

It is the policy of the Baltimore Police Department (BPD) to recognize and acknowledge the meritorious service of its members.

### **DIRECTIVES**

#### **Members**

1. Are encouraged to nominate any member of the agency or non-member of the agency (to include a member of another public safety organization or citizen) by completing Form 50, Meritorious Service Award.
2. May collect referrals for commendation submitted by sworn or civilian members of the agency, individuals from other public safety organizations, or members of the public. Such referrals also necessitate the completion of Form 50.
  - 2.1. The nomination submission must state the specific award for which the member or non-member is being nominated, except for referrals made by individuals external to the agency, which will be judged independently by the Meritorious Service Board (MSB).
  - 2.2. A nomination will not be reviewed unless it includes the applicable supporting documentation. Such documentation may include, but is not limited to:
    - 2.2.1. Incident reports,
    - 2.2.2. Administrative reports,
    - 2.2.3. Body-worn camera (BWC) footage, and
    - 2.2.4. Letters, e-mails, or other media from individuals, whether internal or external to the agency.
3. If an individual external to the agency makes a referral for recognition, the member will request supporting documentation describing, in detail, the incident or action meriting recognition.
4. Forward the completed form and supporting materials to the nominee's Commanding Officer for remarks and signature.

5. Scan/email the completed form and supporting materials to:  
[MeritoriousService@BaltimorePolice.org](mailto:MeritoriousService@BaltimorePolice.org).
6. BPD shall hold two awards ceremonies per year, one in the spring and one in the fall. Nominations must be received by April 1<sup>st</sup> for consideration for the spring ceremony, and must be received by October 1<sup>st</sup> for consideration for the fall ceremony. If a nomination is received after the indicated cut-off date(s), it will be considered for the following ceremony.
7. All submissions for unit citations shall be for the following time periods: January 1 - June 30, July 1 – December 31, or January 1 – December 31. The exception to this would be for a unit that performed duties which were case-specific.
8. In cases where there are multiple nominees (e.g., Unit Citation), supervisors will clearly and thoroughly explain the level of participation for each participant in the incident.

**Commanding Officer**

9. Recognize meritorious service by members of your command.
10. Review and provide a recommendation on Form 50, Meritorious Service Award.
11. Retain a copy of all commendatory action reports and recognition of the award in the member's personnel jacket at the district / division / bureau of origin.

**Chairperson, Meritorious Service Board**

12. A designee from the Office of the Police Commissioner will serve as the Chairperson of the Meritorious Service Board.
13. The Chairperson shall be accountable to the Police Commissioner and act as their designee for the actions of the Board.
14. When necessary, the Chairperson will conduct meetings of the Meritorious Service Board. During meetings, the Chairperson's duties include:
  - 14.1. Calling witnesses and requesting reports when appropriate.
  - 14.2. Providing the Board with proper guidance. Ensure all decisions of the Board reflect a majority vote. The Chairperson will vote only to break a tie.
  - 14.3. Ensuring that all units assigned to plan and prepare the awards ceremony are doing so efficiently and on schedule.
  - 14.4. Ensuring meritorious award reports are forwarded to Board members via PowerDMS.
15. The Chairperson will forward the Meritorious Service Award Report to the Director of Human Resources.

**Members, Meritorious Service Board**

16. Meet when notified by the Chairperson of the Meritorious Service Board.
17. Consider any award nominations submitted.
18. Abstain from voting when they are involved in or are a witness to any matter under review.
19. Review the facts and circumstances of each Meritorious Service Award Report submitted and select one of the following options:
  - 19.1. Deny a Meritorious Service Award.
  - 19.2. Defer action on a particular report pending additional information.
  - 19.3. Recommend a Meritorious Service Award for the Police Commissioner or their designee's consideration.

**Director, Human Resources Section**

20. Ensure that the approved Meritorious Service Award Report is included in the member's personnel file.
21. Retain the original letter of appreciation or commendation, as well as a copy of the commanding officer's acknowledgement in the member's personnel record.

**Composition of the Meritorious Service Board**

The Police Commissioner shall appoint the members of the Meritorious Service Board (MSB). The Board shall be composed of six members holding the rank of Lieutenant or above, or if a civilian member, a manager level or above. Additional MSB members may be appointed by the Police Commissioner at his/her discretion. Representation from each bureau shall be as follows:

- The Chairperson of the Meritorious Service Board.
- One member from the Patrol Division, selected by the Chief of Patrol.
- One member from the Criminal Investigation Division, selected by the Chief of Detectives.
- One member from the Public Integrity Bureau, selected by its Deputy Commissioner.
- One member from the Compliance Bureau, selected by its Deputy Commissioner.
- One member from the Administrative Bureau, selected by its Deputy Commissioner.

Any member appointed to the MSB may be removed at the discretion of the Police Commissioner. Members appointed to serve on the MSB will continue to serve unless they are transferred to a different

Division or Bureau, at which point the appropriate appointing authority will select a replacement.

Appointing authorities may also select themselves as members of the MSB in lieu of another representative from their Division or Bureau.

### **Meetings of the Meritorious Service Board**

22. The Meritorious Service Board shall convene at least twice per year to judge referrals for commendation.
23. Following a meeting, the MSB must communicate its decision(s) on referral(s) to the appropriate member(s) within 30 days.

### **Display of Awards**

24. Above the Badge - Wear in lines, centered over and approximately ¼" above the badge:
  - 24.1. Medal of Honor,
  - 24.2. Legion of Merit,
  - 24.3. Silver Star,
  - 24.4. Bronze Star,
  - 24.5. Medal of Tactical De-escalation,
  - 24.6. Peer Intervention Medal
  - 24.7. Life Saving Award,
  - 24.8. Distinguished Service Award, and
  - 24.9. Commendation.
25. Display these awards, two to a line, with the highest award being worn to the right (inboard) or above awards of lesser distinction.
26. When the number of ribbons constitutes an odd number, wear the highest award above awards of lesser distinction. If the Legion of Merit is displayed, it shall be centered above all other awards subordinate to the Medal of Honor. If the Medal of Honor is displayed, it shall be worn centered over the badge and above all other awards.
27. Wear the following awards in a line centered over and approximately ¼" above the name plate:
  - 27.1. Citation of Valor

- 27.2. De-escalation Ribbon
  - 27.3. Peer Intervention Ribbon
  - 27.4. Problem-Solving Ribbon
  - 27.5. Community Service Ribbon
  - 27.6. Unit Citation
  - 27.7. Expert Pistol Ribbon
  - 27.8. Patrol Rifle Pin
- 28. Display these awards, two to a line, with the highest award being worn to the right (inboard) or above awards of lesser distinction.
  - 29. Wear two color ribbons with the orange or gold portion inboard to the black or blue portion of the ribbon. Awards with a gold star are worn with the point of the star up.
  - 30. Wear awards or commendations from other agencies and/or the military only with the prior approval of the Police Commissioner. Awards of this nature will be worn above the badge subordinate to any departmental awards, but in the same manner as departmental awards. Awards from other law enforcement agencies shall be worn above military awards or commendations.
  - 31. When a member has received more than two of any single award, a gold numeral indicating the total number received may be affixed to one ribbon and worn in conformance with the guidelines above.
  - 32. Do not solicit, accept, or wear awards from the community without obtaining specific permission from the Police Commissioner.

**Awards Ceremony Procedure**

- 33. The Chairperson of the Meritorious Service Board shall organize an awards ceremony after the Police Commissioner has determined a date and time. Awards ceremonies shall occur twice per year. The Police Commissioner (or designee) will present award(s) to recipient(s) at a ceremony at the Police Headquarters Building or another appropriate venue.
- 34. Posthumous awarding of the Medal of Honor or Citation of Valor by the Police Commissioner (or designee) shall occur either at a ceremony, or at the residence of the next of kin, in conformance with the wishes of the deceased member's next of kin.
- 35. The Police Commissioner (or designee) shall present all awards at the awards ceremony, with the exception of the Safe Driver Commendation, the Expert Pistol Ribbon, and the Patrol Rifle Pin (see descriptions below).

**Departmental Commendations – Standards for Achievement**

36. **MEDAL OF HONOR** — The Medal of Honor is awarded by the Police Commissioner to members who distinguish themselves conspicuously by gallantry and courage at the risk of their own lives, above and beyond the call of duty, in an extraordinary act of heroism and bravery without endangering or jeopardizing the lives of others, and without detriment in any way to their sworn oath. A member must perform an act so outstanding that it clearly distinguishes superlative courage, beyond the call of duty, from lesser forms of bravery. The Medal of Honor, when awarded posthumously, shall be affixed to a plaque with a replica of the member's badge and an appropriate inscription. This plaque shall be presented to the deceased member's next of kin by the Police Commissioner or his/her designee. A plaque of similar design shall be displayed in the Departmental Memorial Shrine located in the lobby of the Headquarters Building.
37. **LEGION OF MERIT** — Awarded by the Police Commissioner to members who have distinguished themselves and the Baltimore Police Department through conspicuously outstanding accomplishments in law enforcement. This award may be given for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding service in a law enforcement agency. This activity must be beneficial to and acknowledged by law enforcement agencies in other jurisdictions, and must be so conspicuously outstanding in achievement as to impact future endeavors in the field of law enforcement.
38. **SILVER STAR** — Awarded by the Police Commissioner for an exceptional act or execution of duty performed in the presence of great danger and personal risk without endangering or jeopardizing the lives of others, and performed in such a manner as to clearly indicate that the sworn member displayed outstanding ability and judgment in the performance of duty. This exceptional performance of duty should have resulted in the prevention or solution of a crime, the arrest of those responsible, and should set apart and distinguish the member from other members. To merit this award, the act must be heroic but not to the degree justifying the Medal of Honor. This award shall not be granted for arrests resulting solely from information from an informant.
39. **BRONZE STAR** — Awarded by the Police Commissioner to sworn members who distinguish themselves by displaying exceptionally meritorious service to the department and to the community. The sworn member must have displayed abilities and exercised judgment well above the expected standard, and thereby contributed materially to the success of a major mission, investigation or endeavor. It may be awarded for an act involving personal danger under aggravated or hostile circumstances, as well as for protecting or saving the life of another.
40. **MEDAL OF TACTICAL DE-ESCALATION** — Awarded by the Police Commissioner to sworn members who utilized exceptional tactical skills or verbal approaches and techniques to de-escalate a situation presenting a threat of deadly force or serious bodily harm. Such interventions must be above and beyond the normal course and scope of duty, and must have resulted in either a peaceful outcome, or an outcome where the danger to a person was greatly mitigated in spite of the member being authorized to use a serious or lethal degree of force.
41. **PEER INTERVENTION MEDAL** — Awarded by the Police Commissioner to sworn members who have intervened, on behalf of a fellow colleague, in a situation in which a failure to act would have resulted in misconduct leading to the serious or fatal injury of a person, gross violation of BPD

ethical standards, immense administrative or operational losses (monetary or non-monetary), and/or irreparable damage to the public reputation and credibility of the agency. The action taken must surpass the normal requirements of BPD policy in such a situation, and must embody a selfless commitment to protecting the integrity of fellow members and the communities they serve.

42. **LIFE SAVING AWARD** — Awarded by the Police Commissioner to sworn members whose decisive actions save the life of another person. Situations include: CPR, Heimlich maneuver, prompt application of first aid in potentially fatal situations, and any other act that saves a life. This award may also be granted to members for the above described actions taken when, despite the member's best efforts, the victim dies.
43. **CITATION OF VALOR** — Awarded to sworn members who have sustained gunshot wounds, stab wounds, or serious injury under aggravated and hostile circumstances which could result in death or permanent disability while acting in their official capacity. Authority for the issuance of the Citation of Valor lies solely with the Police Commissioner.
44. **DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD** — Awarded by the Police Commissioner to members who have distinguished themselves by exceptionally meritorious service. The Distinguished Service Award may be awarded to sworn and civilian members who have displayed their abilities well above the expected standards, reflecting technical or administrative achievement, or exceptional leadership in achieving a specific goal, objective or innovation. It distinguishes the individual's performance through achievement, effect or consequence.
45. **PEER INTERVENTION RIBBON** — Awarded to sworn or civilian personnel for intervening in a situation to prevent an incident from becoming problematic or disciplinary, or intervening when witnessing misconduct to prevent further negative outcomes.
46. **PROBLEM-SOLVING RIBBON** — Awarded to sworn or civilian personnel for a notable achievement resulting in increased community trust and collaboration, improved planning and execution of community policing strategies, substantial savings in operational costs, or an enhanced quality of life for a specific Baltimore community. The act(s) must be representative of performance beyond the expectations of normal work assignments.
47. **DE-ESCALATION RIBBON** — Awarded to sworn members who have utilized exceptional tactical skills to de-escalate a situation which could have resulted in a significant act of misconduct, or in an unreasonable and disproportionate, yet non-lethal use of force.
48. **COMMENDATION** — To merit this award, the act of service must be accomplished or performed in a manner above what is normally expected. It must be sufficient to distinguish the individual sworn or civilian member from those of comparable positions and responsibility, and reflect a highly credible accomplishment. The award may be given for submitting an adopted suggestion which constitutes a definite contribution to the department, such as an invention or innovation resulting in an improved design, procedure, organization, or relating to crime prevention or crime resistance. It may be awarded when members have displayed extraordinary intelligence, coverage and ability in effecting arrests, preventing a crime or solving a case.
49. **UNIT CITATION** — Any bureau, division, district, section, subdivision, unit or squad of members of the department is eligible for this award. The Unit Citation is awarded by the District

Commander / Commanding Officer (or designee) to commend extraordinary law enforcement performance, attention to duty, contribution to the agency or to the general welfare of the citizens of the City of Baltimore. The criteria for this award are the same as those of the Commendation, except in recognition of a group effort. The mutual and full participation of all unit members in the cited activity must be explained in detail in order to be considered for this award.

50. **EXPERT PISTOL RIBBON** — Awarded by range personnel to all sworn members who score 100 percent during both daytime and nighttime qualifications. This award is issued and presented to the member by a range supervisor. A member who was issued a ribbon and fails to maintain the established score during the following qualification must return the ribbon to the range.
51. **PATROL RIFLE PIN** — Awarded by range personnel to all sworn members upon successful completion of the Department's Patrol Rifle Training Program. This award is issued and presented to the member by a range supervisor. The pin shall be worn on the right side of the uniform shirt centered just above the name plate.
52. **SPECIAL CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION** — A special certificate signed by the Police Commissioner recognizing sworn or civilian personnel, and / or any individual who works in public safety, for their contribution to the department and the community as a whole. Any public safety official who is not a member of the Baltimore Police Department is eligible for this award, which is presented by the Police Commissioner for valuable or courageous acts that render assistance to the department.
53. **CITIZEN'S AWARD** — A certificate of appreciation signed by the Police Commissioner noting the citizen's contribution to the Department and the community as a whole. Any person who is not a member of the Baltimore Police Department is eligible for this award, which is presented by the Police Commissioner for valuable, courageous, or heroic acts that render assistance to the department.
54. **CIVILIAN SERVICE AWARD** — A special lapel pin awarded to civilian employees by the Police Commissioner, commemorating 20 or 30 years of service, respectively.
55. **COMMUNITY SERVICE RIBBON** — Awarded to sworn or civilian members for their valuable and outstanding service while on or off duty, through an act or series of acts which provided great service to families and / or communities that was beyond the normal call of duty. These acts may range from exceptional job-related community interaction, to volunteer or community service that brings public acclaim to the employee, the Department or the police profession.

### Appeals Process

If a member feels an exemplary work event or performance has been overlooked, they may submit an administrative report through their chain of command to the Meritorious Service Board for consideration and review. However, the authority to grant a meritorious service award rests solely with the Police Commissioner or their designee. A decision accepting or declining an award is made for every submission, and all decisions are final.



**APPENDIX**

A. Meritorious Service Award, Form 50

**RESCISSION**

Remove and destroy/recycle Policy 1712, *Departmental Awards and Commendations*, dated 4 April 2017.

**COMMUNICATION OF POLICY**

This policy is effective on the date listed herein. Each employee is responsible for complying with the contents of this policy.

## APPENDIX A

# Meritorious Service Award, Form 50 (page 1)

Meritorious Service Award  
Form 050D/20

POLICE DEPARTMENT  
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

Meritorious Service Award  
Report Form 050/84

To : Meritorious Service Board

From : \_\_\_\_\_  
(Member Name: First, Last)

\_\_\_\_\_ (District / Division)

Subject : \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of Candidate)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Assignment)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Candidate Sequence Number)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Award Type)

Instructions:

In order for the Board to effectively evaluate the merits of an incident, case, or distinguished service, a complete explanation must be submitted, containing all of the essential facts in detail. Field and arrest/custody reports shall be included and, where applicable, include other documents pertinent to the case.

Explain in detail:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

(If additional space is needed, use reverse side.)

APPENDIX A (cont.)

## Meritorious Service Award, Form 50 (page 2)

<small>Meritorious Service Award (Continued) Form 050D/20</small>	(CONTINUED)
_____ Date	_____ Signature
Remarks, if any, by the Commanding Officer:	
_____ Signature of Commanding Officer	
ACTION OF MERITORIOUS SERVICE BOARD	
Award Suggested:	Date:
Comment:	
_____ Chairman	
_____ Member	_____ Member
_____ Member	_____ Member
_____ Member	_____ Member
Disposition:	
_____ Police Commissioner	