



Colorado Springs Police Department

General Order

1864 Meritorious Service Awards

Section 1800 – Personnel Functions

Effective Date: 4/15/2025

Supersedes Date: 10/19/2023

.01 Purpose

The purpose of this directive is to outline the meritorious service awards established by the department in recognition of outstanding service, and the procedure for recommending them.

.02 Cross-Reference

[GO 1862 Gun and Badge Retention](#)

[DL-1710-09 Awards Committee](#)

.03 Discussion

The Colorado Springs Police Department (CSPD) expects a high level of professional conduct from all employees; however, personnel of the department frequently perform their duties in a manner exceeding the highest expectations of the department. When such conduct occurs, official commendations will be made.

Commendations may originate from citizens or from within the department and are intended to cite exemplary conduct and standards that all personnel of the department should strive to attain. Additionally, the department honors those citizens of the community who substantially assist the department, in an extraordinary manner, beyond their normal civic responsibilities.

.04 Policy

Considerations for commendations and other meritorious service awards must be handled in a manner that is consistent with all policies and procedures and reflects favorably upon the department.

.05 Definitions

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.10 Recommendations for Awards

Any employee may initiate the award review process by submitting a memorandum to the awards committee. The memorandum must include all names of persons involved in and the circumstances of an event, the names of witnesses, and any other pertinent details.

Personnel making recommendations to the awards committee will submit their memorandum to their chain of command and the respective commander will forward the memorandum to the commander of the professional standards division who chairs, schedules, and prepares for committee meetings. Deputy chiefs will submit their recommendation directly to the committee via the commander of the professional standards division. **Any award recommendations by a member of Command Staff to recognize another member of Command Staff will be submitted via memorandum directly to the Chief for consideration.**

When relevant, employees should consider an officer's safety priority in decision-making when submitting award recommendations.

.12 Special Procedures for Citizens

Any department employee may recommend a citizen for one of the two appropriate awards by submitting a memorandum to their chain of command and the respective commander will forward the memorandum to the commander of the professional standards division who chairs, schedules, and prepares for committee meetings. Deputy chiefs will submit their recommendation directly to the committee via the commander of the professional standards division.

If the nomination is approved, the recommending member should be present for the award presentation at the annual awards ceremony.

.20 Issuance of Awards

The chief of police will issue awards, at any given or specific ceremony, at the earliest opportunity. Representatives of the news media will be specifically invited to attend any ceremony. All persons to receive awards will be invited to attend as guests of the department.

.30 Display of Department Awards

City marshals, community service officers, and sworn personnel of the department who are awarded the Police Medal of Honor, the Police Medal of Valor, the Distinguished Service Award,

the Purple Heart, the Life-Saving Medal, the Police Star, or the Department Commendation are requested to wear the ribbon bar on the authorized placard pinned to the outer garment. The ribbon bar placard will be worn on the right breast, centered 1/4 inch above the nameplate.

.40 Awards for Meritorious Service

The following departmental awards are hereby established and will be presented to department personnel and citizens, in accordance with the criteria established for each award.

.41 The Police Medal of Honor

The Police Medal of Honor is the highest award in the department and is to be awarded to any police officer or city marshal who, at the risk of their life and beyond the call of duty, distinguishes themselves conspicuously, by heroism or self-sacrifice in a manner so extraordinary as to set them apart.

.42 The Police Cross

The Police Cross is in rank in the department next to the Medal of Honor and is to be awarded if an officer or city marshal lost their life in the performance of duty, under honorable circumstances. The Police Cross may be awarded in addition to any other award the recipient may be entitled to in making the supreme sacrifice.

.43 The Police Medal of Valor

The Police Medal of Valor is ranked next in prominence to the Police Cross. The Medal of Valor is to be awarded to any police officer or city marshal who, at risk of their life or of serious bodily injury, distinguishes themselves by extraordinary bravery in a manner not meeting the criteria for the Medal of Honor.

.44 The Distinguished Service Award

The Distinguished Service Award is ranked next in prominence to the Medal of Valor. The Distinguished Service Award is to be awarded to any police officer or city marshal who, during an incident involving risk of serious bodily injury to themselves or another, distinguishes themselves by a courageous act above and beyond that required by the employee's basic assignment but in a manner not meeting the criteria for the Medal of Valor.

.45 The Purple Heart

The Purple Heart is to be awarded to any police officer or city marshal who is seriously wounded in the line of duty, by an assailant, while involved in a combat situation. The injury must not be the result of, or concurrent with, any conduct of the recipient that is less than acceptable by all standards.

.46 The Life Saving Award

The Life Saving Award may be awarded for a single act in which the department member displayed extraordinary performance in their duty to save the life of a person that would have likely died if not for the action of the department member. Documentation and supporting evidence must be included, such as BWC footage and statements from witnesses, physicians, or supervisors. This award may be presented in addition to other medals.

.47 The Police Star

May be awarded to any police officer or city marshal of this department who is seriously injured, in the line of duty, while involved in an enforcement action. The injury must not be the result of, or concurrent with, any conduct of the recipient that is less than acceptable by all standards.

Although this award is primarily intended to recognize the victims of assaults, who are properly performing their duties, the committee may consider injuries resulting from fires, explosions, etc. The committee may not consider injuries sustained from falls on ice, motor vehicle accidents, and the like, unless the evidence clearly indicates the victim had exhausted all reasonable safety precautions and had no control over the circumstances.

It will be issued in the form of a certificate and a ribbon bar.

.50 Department Commendation

This is an award, granted to any officer or civilian employee, for an outstanding act or achievement that brings credit to the department and that involves performance above and beyond that required by the employee's basic assignment. It will be issued in the form of a certificate and a ribbon bar.

.51 Chief's Unit Citation

Awarded to a unit or team for an act or display of conduct that shows determination, esprit de corps, diligence, and cooperative effort in fulfillment of a difficult and challenging mission, operation, task, or project under extraordinary circumstances. Circumstances may be deemed extraordinary when they do not represent the typical day-to-day circumstances under which the

unit normally performs or may reasonably be expected to perform. It will be issued to the unit in the form of a plaque.

Individuals in the unit may also receive a written version of the citation. For individuals to receive the written citation they must have directly supported the act (e.g., a unit member on vacation when the act took place would not receive the written version of the citation).

.52 Ron Gibson Excellence in Ethics Award

This award honors and recognizes an individual (sworn or civilian) or team displaying excellence in ethical decision-making and/or response to an ethical dilemma. This award can be given in recognition or response to a single incident, in response to an ongoing situation, or to recognize a person whose career demonstrates ethics and integrity. The individual or team must have made an ethical decision that had an impact on the nominee, the organization, and/or the community.

The award will not be given with a prescribed frequency; rather, it will be given when it is deserved. Any employee or volunteer of the police department may nominate an individual or a team for this award. The CSPD Ethics Committee will receive all nominations for this award and will forward those deemed appropriate to the CSPD Awards Committee.

The judges of this award should consider the following criteria:

- The complexity of the situation and decisions made during the dilemma
- The good that resulted from their actions
- The difficulty of the circumstances
- The overall degree to which the nominee deserves the award

.53 Major Incident Recognition Ribbon

On occasion, department personnel respond to major incidents that do not meet the criteria for department awards but, due to their nature, are deserving of special recognition for the involved employees. The Awards Committee is responsible for identifying these incidents, and for determining which employees will receive recognition.

The general design of the ribbon bar will be a black background with gold bars (for the first responders to an incident, such as initial call takers, dispatchers, and patrol officers) or a black background with silver bars (for employees who were not first responders, but who significantly contributed to the department's response).

Examples of incidents that qualify for the Major Incident Recognition Ribbon include but are not limited to major natural or man-made disaster responses, active shooter situations, major political events, and other occurrences that have a significant and lasting impact on the City or CSPD.

The formal name for this recognition is the Major Incident Recognition Ribbon. It will be presented to identified civilian or sworn personnel by their division commander or manager, in the form of a ribbon bar.

.54 American Eagle Awards

The American Eagle Award was originally proposed by community member Mr. Raul Maynez who sought to recognize sworn members for their contributions. The recipient of this monthly award is selected by the Awards Committee using the following broad criteria:

- Exemplary leadership
- A job well-done
- A project or assignment successfully completed
- Actions taken during a particular incident
- A series of events or projects
- An employee's overall performance and attitude.

The sworn recipient of this award will be given a certificate and a replica of the department's patrol vehicle, which is manufactured by the local non-profit Wheels of a Dream.

.55 The Hundred Club

The mission of *The Hundred Club of Colorado Springs* is to provide financial assistance to the spouses and children of law enforcement officers and firefighters of Colorado Springs and El Paso County who lose their lives in the line of duty and to recognize outstanding performance by those dedicated to maintaining public safety in our communities.

Every year at The Hundred Club of Colorado Springs Annual Dinner and Awards Ceremony, one sworn officer is recognized from each of the region's public service departments, including the department. The criteria for recognition is based on:

- Outstanding performance
- Dedication to maintaining public safety in our community.

The Awards Committee will be responsible for submitting the names of at least two but no more than three sworn members as possible candidates for the award. The names of those nominees and the circumstances of the nomination will be submitted to the Chief of Police for their review and approval.

.56 North End and East Side Rotary Club Officer of the Month

On a monthly basis, the Awards Committee will select an East Side Rotary Club Officer of the Month award. On a quarterly basis, the committee will select a North End Rotary Club Officer of the Month award. These selections will be taken from previously approved Commander Commendations or Written Commendations.

.57 Civilian of the Month

On a monthly basis, the Awards Committee will select a civilian member as a civilian of the month. These selections will be taken from previously approved Commander Commendations or Written Commendations.

.60 The Colorado Springs Police Award

This award is designed to show appreciation for heroism, or outstanding service, by members of other law enforcement agencies who acted in cooperation with the CSPD. This award is equivalent to the Medal of Valor.

.70 The Civilian Medal of Distinction

This is the highest award granted to a citizen or civilian employee for a contribution to the Colorado Springs Police Department that impacts public safety, as described in paragraph .72. The recipient must have been fully aware of the imminent threat to personal safety and acted at the risk of their life.

This award is presented annually to a citizen who is selected by the sponsor of the Medal of Valor luncheon. The Police Department will provide a medal to the sponsor for this purpose.

.72 Citizen's Award of Appreciation

This award is presented to a citizen who provides outstanding assistance to the department in preventing crime, apprehending criminals, renders an outstanding service to the department that would be worthy of department recognition, or performs an outstanding heroic act, at considerable personal danger to themselves, which culminated in saving a life.

The committee will have the option of awarding a special plaque to accompany the Citizen's Certificate if the committee feels the citizen's act warrants such action. The following examples illustrate some types of actions suitable for this award:

- Apprehending a person who has committed a criminal act, either by making or assisting in the arrest or by providing information that leads to an arrest.
- Assistance to the police in preventing criminal acts.

- Directly aiding a police officer, by any actions, whose result is beneficial to the department.
- Performing an outstanding heroic act that saves a life; for example, from fire or drowning.
- Any action not described above that assists the department in providing superior police service and that is beyond that normally expected of a good citizen.

.74 Letter of Appreciation

A letter sent from the chief of police, at their own initiative or upon the recommendation of the Awards Committee, to citizens, in recognition of services to the department. Such letters are to be used for recognition of services that do not merit the Citizen's Award of Appreciation.

.80 Written Commendation

An award approved through command channels rather than by the awards committee, to recognize department members for acts or achievements which bring credit to the department, and which involve performance above and beyond that required by the employee's basic assignment. It will be awarded in the form of a certificate.

.82 Commander's Commendation

Commander's commendations are awards presented at the division level that recognizes a department member for excellent performance or outstanding work on an incident, activity, or special project that does not reach the level of a department commendation. It will be awarded in the form of a certificate, signed by the supervisor and the division commander.

.83 Commander's Certificate of Appreciation

A Commander's Certificate of Appreciation is presented at the division level to a citizen, group of citizens or a business for their service to the police department at a division level. This certificate would be used for recognition of services provided at the division level that do not rise to the level of a Letter of Appreciation. It will be awarded in the form of a certificate signed by the division commander.