Subject: Medals and Awards		Policy Number: ADM: 28
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1) PURPOSE

a) The purpose of this policy is to provide administrative guidelines for the issuance of awards and commendations to employees of the Department of Public Safety (DPS).

2) POLICY

a) It is the policy of DPS to recognize the outstanding achievements of DPS employees. DPS will recognize its employees for outstanding examples of bravery, humanitarianism, or superior efforts. Recognition and incentives will be offered through the Public Conferral of Awards and Certificates. Awards will be presented by the DPS Secretary, NMSP Chief, Deputy Secretary, or the appropriate Division Director. Recognition, incentives, certificates and awards will be awarded throughout the year at the discretion of the Chief.

3) APPLICABILITY

a) This policy applies to all DPS employees.

4) REFERENCES

a) New Mexico Statutes Annotated
b) CALEA Chapter 26 – Disciplinary Procedures

5) DEFINITIONS

a) **Awards Review Committee** – The Chief will establish and maintain an Awards Review Committee. The committee will be responsible for the preparation of the Awards Ceremony and for reviewing all nominations forwarded by the Chief of the NMSP. The Chief of the NMSP shall serve as the chairperson and shall appoint a co-chairperson who must be of rank of captain or above. The co-chairperson may select no less than two (2) and no more than four (4) additional members to serve on the committee. The committee members shall remain anonymous.

b) **DPS** – The Department of Public Safety.
c) **Employee** – Refers to personnel of the DPS.
d) **IDC** – Inter-Departmental Correspondence.
e) **Serious Bodily Injury** – As defined by New Mexico statutes and for the purposes of this policy "serious bodily injury" is defined as bodily injury which involves a substantial risk of death, serious permanent disfigurement, or protracted loss or impairment of the function of any part or organ of the body.

6) OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

a) **Nomination Process** – Any commissioned employee may nominate other commissioned personnel for these awards. Any commissioned employee regardless of rank or tenure is eligible for nomination for any award, unless otherwise specified. For the Meritorious Achievement Award, any civilian employee is also eligible. (For purposes of this policy, the bureau chief of the civilian employees shall perform the same function in the nomination process that the "commander" performs in the nomination of commissioned personnel).
   i) Nominating employees should forward to the Office of the Chief, the justification and data that supports the nominee. The nominations shall be sent via an IDC on or before the close of business on January 31, of the most current year.
   ii) The co-chairperson of the Awards Review Committee shall make a recommendation to the Chief from the recommended list of nominations.
   iii) In order not to diminish the importance of any particular award, approval of the Chief must be received, in addition to the recommendation and approval of the Awards Review Committee.
   iv) All nominations shall be submitted to the commander of the nominated employee(s). In the nomination of a civilian the nomination shall be submitted to the bureau chief(s) of the employee.
   v) The commander, or bureau chief, shall review and support or deny the nomination. This review includes any reports that would tend to support the nomination.
   vi) A commendation or award nomination, after review by the commander or bureau chief shall be forwarded along with a letter of support or denial, from the commander or bureau chief, through the appropriate major and the deputy chief or appropriate civilian chain of command. The deputy

chief or civilian division director will forward all nominations to the Chief's designated co-chairperson of the Awards Review Committee.

(1) Major's Review – Those nominations that the majors concur with shall be forwarded to the deputy chief.

(2) Deputy Chief or civilian Division Director's Review – Those nominations that the deputy chief or civilian division director concurs with shall be forwarded to the Chief for approval.

(3) Chief's Review – The Chief will confer with the Standards Bureau Commander to verify the nominee(s) are not under an Internal Affairs investigation related to the specific event being considered for an award. Such information shall be verbally produced. Those nominations which the Chief believes to be worthy will be forwarded to the Awards Review Committee.

b) **Convening of the Awards Review Committee** – The Awards Review Committee shall meet whenever deemed necessary by the Chief. If there are no nominations, the committee will not meet unless requested by the Chief.

i) The committee may request anyone to appear as a witness and may examine reports and any additional documentation as deemed necessary to make a final determination for approval or denial of the award.

ii) The committee will make recommendations on each employee nominated for an award.

iii) If any committee member should be the nominee for any particular award, that member shall excuse him/herself from any committee actions pertaining to his/her nomination. If deemed necessary, a substitute or replacement will be appointed by the Chief for that particular committee review.

c) **Final Award Decision** – The Chief shall make the final decision on the type of award, if any, to be presented. The Chief shall direct his staff to obtain the award and will decide when to honor the employee(s) chosen. The nominee(s) selected for recognition will be normally honored at the annual Awards Ceremony, unless otherwise directed by the Chief. The Chief shall, in the case of civilian nominations, consult with the appropriate Deputy Secretary prior to making the final decision.

d) **Awards Ceremony** – The Department of Public Safety will hold an awards ceremony once, each second quarter of the year, or at any time in the year at the discretion of the Chief.
   i) The exact date, time and location will be announced in advance through correspondence to all employee(s) from the Office of the Chief, in consultation with the Secretary or Deputy Secretaries.
   ii) Commissioned personnel attending as recipients must appear in uniform. Civilian recipients will dress in the proper attire specified by the respective bureau chief(s).
   iii) All officers shall appear in class "A" uniforms unless otherwise authorized by the Chief.
   iv) Commendations and awards will be presented in the order directed by the Chief.
   v) Duty schedules will be adjusted to allow for the attendance of the nominated employee(s).

e) **Wearing of the Medals** – Commissioned personnel shall wear their medals only in the manner authorized by the Chief as follows:
   i) The Medal of Valor, Purple Heart and Distinguished Service Medals may be worn on formal occasions on the class "A" uniform only. They will be worn on the right side of the uniform shirt, with the bottom of the ribbon aligned with the top of the name plate, centered above the name plate. The medals may be worn with the appropriate civilian attire, such as a suit with the medal worn on the right side in an area that would be consistent with the placement of the medal on a uniform shirt.
   ii) The breast ribbon bars may be worn on the uniform shirt, centered above the right pocket, with the bottom of the ribbon aligned with the top of the nameplate. The breast ribbon bars will not be worn on civilian clothing and can only be worn for formal occasions with class "A" uniforms.
   iii) If an officer is awarded the Medal of Valor, Purple Heart and Distinguished Service Medals, the breast ribbon bars will be placed side by side and centered along the top of the nameplate over the right pocket. Subsequent awards for any medal will be indicated by a gold star on the medal.
   iv) The Marksmanship Pin may be routinely worn on the Class A uniform shirt; centered above the right pocket, with the bottom of the pin 1/8 inch above the top of the nameplate.

f) **Awards for Bravery/Lifesaving**

These awards are open to commissioned personnel only. No employee will be eligible if he/she has a pending internal affairs investigation related to the corresponding event. If no one qualifies for any particular award during the year, none will be given. If more than one nominee is qualified, the DPS will recognize the appropriate number.

i) **Medal of Valor** – This is the highest award presented by the DPS. It is a gold medal with neck ribbon (red, white, and blue), a uniform ribbon, and a formal written certificate signed and presented by the Chief at the awards ceremony. The following conditions qualify an employee for the Medal of Valor:

(1) An employee who displays conspicuous gallantry and integrity at the risk of their own life, above and beyond the call of duty, is eligible for this award.

(a) The employee must have been aware of the great personal danger prior to the performance of the act, and the act must have involved great risk to life; and

(b) The employee must have followed proper departmental procedures, i.e. no violation of rules and regulations or policies and procedures.

(2) An employee who loses their life in the line of duty, and the circumstances indicate an act of valor was performed, is automatically eligible for a posthumous conferral of the Medal of Valor.

ii) **Purple Heart Award** – This is the second highest award conferred by the DPS. It consists of a gold and silver medal with a purple pin ribbon, a solid-color purple bar for the uniform, and a formal written certificate, signed and presented by the Chief at the awards ceremony. The Purple Heart Award can only be offered under the following circumstances:

(1) The employee sustains serious bodily injury, as defined in this policy, while in the performance of assigned duties. This injury could have resulted from any act or cause, including a fire or explosion; and

(2) If the serious bodily injury is sustained as a result of a traffic crash, it must have occurred during the pursuit of a dangerous or wanted felon or in response to an emergency or an immediate danger. The employee must be judged to be free of driver error.

(3) An employee who is awarded the Medal of Valor and sustains serious bodily injury in the course of their actions is not precluded from also receiving the Purple Heart Award.

iii) **Distinguished Service Medal** – This award consists of a silver medal with gold and blue neck ribbon, a blue and gold award bar, and a formal written certificate signed and presented by the Chief at the awards ceremony. Awarded to an employee who distinguishes themselves by an act of extraordinary heroism that does not meet the exacting standards of the Medal of Valor or the Purple Heart Award. Candidates must meet at least one of the following requirements:

(1) The employee was unaware of the personal danger prior to the performance of the act, but performed in a commendable manner upon becoming aware of the danger;

(2) The employee sustained bodily injury that does not meet the criterion for "serious bodily injury" and was in danger, but not great personal danger; or

(3) The employee, through exceptional knowledge or behavior, performed a physical act that saved the life of another person, with or without danger to the rescuing employee.

iv) **Life Saving Award** – An employee who performed actions or who applied techniques that resulted in saving or sustaining a human life, i.e. CPR, use of NARCAN. The Life Saving award is presented in the form of a formal written certificate.

g) **Awards for Exceptional Service**

i) **Meritorious Achievement Award** – This award is open to civilian and commissioned personnel. It consists of a formal certificate and plaque signed by the appropriate deputy secretary in the recipient's chain of command and the DPS Secretary. It is presented by the appropriate deputy secretary at the awards ceremony. Employees meeting the following criteria may be nominated:

(1) Displaying unusual attention to duty, performance of assigned functions in an exceptionally effective manner, and in general, exemplifying a "commitment to excellence";

(2) Making an exceptional contribution to the progress of the Department including the submission of an idea, device, or program. The contribution must be adopted and be instrumental in increasing the

administrative or operational efficiency of the Department as a whole; and/or

(3) Making an exceptional contribution to the fight against crime, drugs or gangs in the community, whether on or off-duty, or as a volunteer. This contribution must be positive and measurable in its impact upon the community.

ii) **Award of Excellence** – Open to civilian and commissioned personnel within the Department of Public Safety that are CVSA certified. It consists of a formal plaque and is awarded once a year. It is presented by the Chief at the awards ceremony. Employees meeting the following criteria may be nominated:

(1) Distinguishing themselves among their peers in the motor carrier safety enforcement community;

(2) Developing or implementing a program or operational procedure(s) that has a significant positive impact on the accomplishment of Department of Public Safety's mission;

(3) Developing or implementing innovative procedure(s) or training curriculum that improves the way Department of Public Safety personnel accomplish their job functions; and/or

(4) Contributing to the improvement of Department of Public Safety's image within the regulatory or law enforcement community.

h) **Other Awards**

i) **Yearly awards** – Recipients of the following awards shall receive a framed certificate, or certificate and plaque that will be presented at the annual awards ceremony. The recipients of the following awards will be selected by the Awards Review Committee and the employee's respective Division Director. These individuals must have continually performed acts or services on and off duty that reflect professionalism, dedication, and commitment to the community and department. The following is a list of annual awards given by each division:

(1) **New Mexico State Police**

(a) Officer of the Year

(b) Agent of the Year

(c) Civilian of the Year

(2) **Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Bureau**

(a) Officer of the Year

(b) Inspector of the Year
(c) Civilian of the Year

(3) **Mounted Patrol**
(a) Mounted Patrolman of the Year

ii) The recipients of the following awards are not determined by the awards review committee:

(1) Commission Certificate of Promotion – A formal framed commissioned certificate and a letter of commendation signed by the DPS Secretary, the NMSP Chief, and the Governor. This shall be awarded to all commissioned employees who are promoted.

(2) **Challenge Coins** – A coin with a letter of commendation signed by the appropriate Deputy Secretary or Division Director. These awards are presented throughout the year to commissioned personnel with no more than ten (10) being awarded in any single month. This award is for exceeding normal duty expectations and providing superior effort to the department and the public with an exceptional performance and/or action. Commissioned personnel are eligible for this award and may be nominated by any other department personnel. The following procedures will be followed when submitting a nomination:
(a) Individuals will submit their nominations to their district commander (NMSP) / supervising lieutenant (SIU and CVE); and
(b) Nominations will be forwarded to the appropriate zone commander for final determination on issuance of award.
(c) Employees are not precluded from being nominated for other awards if said employee is the recipient of a challenge coin.

(3) **Marksmanship Pin** – This award is automatically conferred for meeting the applicable criteria during the New Mexico State Police 60-round fundamental day pistol course qualifications. The pin and required scores are as follows:
(a) Marksman (Score of 87.0) - Black background with the words "Pistol Marksman" inscribed in gold text.
(b) Sharpshooter (Score of 90.0) - Black background with the words "Pistol Sharpshooter" inscribed in gold text.
(c) Expert (Score of 93.0) - Black background with the words "Pistol Expert" inscribed in gold text.
(d) Master (Score of 96.0 two consecutive times) - Black background with the words "Pistol Master" inscribed in gold text.

7) ATTACHMENTS

a) **NONE**

8) APPROVAL

APPROVED BY: _____ **DATE:** 11/17/25

DPS Cabinet Secretary