



Newport News Police Department - Administrative Manual

ADM-280 - AWARDS AND COMMENDATIONS

Amends/Supersedes: ADM-280 (01/11/2021)

Date of Issue: 10/04/2021

I. GENERAL

- A. The Department bestows awards and commendations in the form of medals (and accompanying commendation bars), plaques, certificates, coins, and letters of commendation.
- B. All communications relating to the awards and commendations process shall be routed through the chain of command. In order to maintain the credibility of the awards program, thorough documentation supporting the nomination is mandatory and shall be attached to the correspondence. [26.1.2]
 - 1. Award and commendation nominations may originate from a nominee's fellow employees or an employee's supervisors.
 - 2. Any reservation regarding the nomination shall be noted and attached to the nomination paperwork to be forwarded up the chain of command as a documented part of the process but will not prevent the nomination from progressing to the nominee's bureau commander.
- C. The Awards Committee, through the Chief of Police, has the latitude to match nominations and recipients as appropriate.
- D. All Department sanctioned awards, both internal and external, will be channeled through the Awards Committee, except as noted.
- E. Nominations involving justifiable firearms discharges may be submitted through the chain of command by supervisors upon completion of the administrative investigation by the Internal Affairs Division. Each incident will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

II. PROCEDURE

[26.1.2]

A. Award Types

NOTE: Department awards are presented at the annual awards ceremony.

1. *Medal of Valor*:

Medal of Valor is the Department's highest award, issued to sworn officers who, while attempting to save a life or perform some other gravely important police service, perform heroically under unusually difficult and dangerous conditions. The Medal of Valor is the Department's highest honor. The Medal of Valor is issued when:

- a. The officer performs a courageous act far above and beyond the call of duty.
- b. The officer's actions are sound and appropriate.
- c. The officer knowingly and voluntarily exposes themselves to danger.
- d. The danger is so extreme that the officer's death or serious injury is a predictable, reasonably expected result.

The commendation bar associated with this medal is half-white and half-purple in color.

2. Other Medals

- a. Purple Heart: Awarded to any employee killed or seriously injured in the line of duty. The commendation bar associated with this medal is solid purple in color.

- b. **Lifesaving:** Awarded to any employee who takes appropriate action exceeding the normal call of duty that results in a human life being saved, where the recipient was not placed in personal danger. The commendation bar associated with this medal is red, white, and green in color.

NOTE: Letters of commendation may be awarded for valiant efforts taken in an unsuccessful lifesaving attempt.

- c. **25 Years of Service:** Awarded to any employee who has served the department for 25 years. The commendation bar associated with this award is red, white, and blue in color.

3. Plaques/Awards

- a. *Officer of the Year:* Awarded to the uniformed officer, detective, or support officer selected from the letters of nomination. The commendation bar associated with this award is tan and burgundy in color.

NOTE: Not to be confused with an “officer of the year” honor awarded by a civic group.

- b. *Dispatcher of the Year:* Awarded to the dispatcher selected letters of nomination.
- c. *Supervisor of the Year:* Awarded to a first-line supervisor, either sworn or non-sworn, who exemplifies the core values and principles that are essential to the success of both the agency served and the employees under their command. Selected from letters of nomination. The commendation bar associated with this award is red, white, and blue.
- d. *Non-Sworn Employee of the Year:* Awarded to the non-sworn employee selected letters of nomination. Group recognition is not acceptable.
- e. *Volunteer of the Year:* Awarded to a volunteer selected letters of nominations.
- f. *Chief's Awards:* Awarded solely at the Chief's discretion to individuals who perform a particular act or consistently perform their duties in an exemplary manner as an expression of gratitude for outstanding performance.
- g. *Largest Crime Reduction for the Year:* Awarded to the precinct that has the largest overall crime reduction for the year. The awarded precinct will be selected by the Chief of Police.
- h. *George Austin Leadership Award:* Awarded to a Newport News Police Department employee whose positive character, heart, and work ethic enables them to be a leader among their peers and overall in the Department. The award recipient will be selected by the Chief of Police.
- i. *William F. Corvello Community Award:* Awarded to a Newport News Police Department employee whose activities have served to make that employee a community role model and whose generous community spirit and sharing efforts have improved the quality of life for Newport News citizens. The award recipient will be selected by the Chief of Police.
- j. *Problem Solving of the Year:* Awarded to the individual or group that has presented a project of significant substance through the assessment stage or beyond and has applied the SARA model.
- k. *Citizen's Service Award:* Awarded to a citizen for:
 - 1) An extreme act of bravery while assisting the Police Department or one of its employees.
 - 2) Rendering help to an officer or a Police Department employee.
 - 3) Providing significant assistance in solving a case (or service to law enforcement).

4. Certificates

Certificates may be awarded in conjunction with commendation letters authorized by the Chief of Police, including, but not limited to, the following instances:

- a. *Outstanding Police Performance*: Awarded to an officer/detective who has, throughout the year, exhibited exemplary performance or for a particular act during the year, worthy of special recognition but not rising to the medal level.
- b. *Outstanding Contribution to Law Enforcement*: Awarded to non-sworn and City employees who have, throughout the year, exhibited exemplary performance or for a particular act during the year.

NOTE: This award may also be awarded to employees of other law enforcement agencies.

- c. Other certificates as authorized by the Chief of Police.

5. Letters of Commendation

- a. A letter of commendation may be written by the Chief of Police to an employee for one of the following reasons:
 - 1) Completing a job task in an exemplary manner.
 - 2) Submission of a recommendation that directly contributes to increased Department productivity or efficiency.
- b. A supervisor may recommend a letter of commendation for an employee by submitting a memorandum to the Chief of Police. The memorandum shall detail the specific actions or ideas that merit the letter of commendation. The memorandum will be forwarded to the Chief of Police, with each command level attaching appropriate comments.
- c. Any supervisor may write a letter of commendation to any employee for reasons specified herein. They shall transmit the letters and copies as follows:
 - 1) Original to the employee's personnel file through the Office of the Chief of Police.
 - 2) Copy to the employee.
 - 3) Copy to the employee's bureau/precinct/division commander.
- d. Letters of Commendation from Outside Departments
 - 1) Employees shall direct any letters commending an employee's on-duty conduct from outside the Department to the Chief of Police. The Chief of Police will review each letter, prepare a response to the sender, make comments if appropriate and forward a copy of the letter to the employee with the original placed in the employee's personnel file.
 - 2) Letters of commendation may be presented to the employee upon receipt by his supervisor or following review through the chain of command.

B. Recommendations for Awards

1. Department Awards

- a. Nominations for awards shall be submitted by officers and citizens by letter to the Office of the Chief of Police. Nominations must include:
 - 1) A detailed account of the event.
 - 2) Corroborating statements or documentation (e.g., statements from medics or doctors) concerning the event.
 - 3) Photographs (if available).
 - 4) Body camera video identifier (if available).
 - 5) Other related factors affecting the nomination.

NOTE: Nominations for citizen awards will include contact information for the nominee.

- b. The Awards Committee chair will announce the deadline for submitting nominations for any calendar year.
- c. The appropriate Bureau Commander for the nominee will send completed packages to the Awards Committee chair. Incomplete nominations will be returned to the party responsible for the incomplete area for corrections.

2. Civic-Sponsored Awards

- a. All inquiries from civic or professional organizations concerning the nomination of a Police Department employee for an award are directed to the Office of the Chief of Police.
- b. The Chief of Police forwards such solicitations to the Awards Committee chair, who requests nominations from Department sections. Requests will contain information, including:
 - 1) Application procedures.
 - 2) Application deadline.
 - 3) Specific qualifications required for award consideration.
 - 4) Any complimentary letters in the employee's file.
- c. Solicitations for civic-sponsored "Officer of the Year" awards will be handled as follows:
 - 1) No more than one nominee will be provided to the Awards Committee from each Department section solicited.
 - 2) The nomination may come from the Awards Committee (based on previous award letter submissions) or the precinct.
 - 3) The final nominee will be selected by the Awards Committee.
- d. Personnel who are recognized with a civic award will have their name and the award listed in the printed program for the annual awards ceremony.

3. Awards Committee

- a. The Awards Committee chair is an individual, rank of captain or above, appointed by the Chief of Police.
- b. In addition to the chair, the Committee shall be comprised of fifteen voting members. Sworn and non-sworn will be selected to ensure diversity and adequate representation from the four bureaus. Additionally, an administrative member may be assigned to assist the Committee (but will not be one of the fifteen voting members).

NOTE The Awards Committee chair will solicit from the executive staff recommendations for members for the Awards Committee and will appoint members from the names submitted for consideration.

- c. The chair appoints Committee members to serve staggered terms of two years.
- d. The Awards Committee shall meet as needed to review nominations and make recommendations to the Chief of Police. Seven Committee members constitute a quorum, which must be present to conduct Committee business.
- e. The Awards Committee chair shall maintain current records of awards for each employee, and upon reappointment of the position, shall ensure that the records are transferred in their entirety to the incoming Awards Committee chair.
 - 1) The Committee will consider the nominations for approval.

- 2) Considerations are weighted based on merit and the details presented in the nomination letter and accompanying materials.
- f. Approval requires a simple majority affirmation by the Committee quorum.
- g. Selected nominations are forwarded to the three Assistant Chiefs of Police for review and consideration.
- h. Following approval by the three Assistant Chiefs of Police, the nominations will be forwarded to the Chief of Police for review and final consideration.
- i. Following approval by the Chief of Police, the chair shall notify award recipients in writing, providing tentative dates of presentation.
- j. Employees who are nominated but do not receive an award will receive written notification thanking them for their efforts and advising them of the decision.

C. Awards Presentation

1. Awards are presented to Police Department employees during the annual awards ceremony.
 - a. The ceremony will honor those employees who are to receive medals or other appropriate awards.
 - b. Annual award recipients will be notified in advance of the award they will be receiving so the appropriate invitations can be issued by the recipient to family and friends.
2. The Chief of Police will forward the names of citizens selected for a Police Department award to the City Manager for possible additional recognition by the City.

D. Display of Awards

[41.3.4]


1. Commendation Bars

Display of all authorized commendation bars is encouraged with the basic summer or winter uniform and is mandatory with the honor guard uniform. When worn, the officer shall display all accrued awards as detailed in [ADM-520 Issuance & Wearing of Uniforms & Equipment](#).

2. Medals

Medals are displayed on the right side of the uniform shirt in the same precedence as the commendation bars. The pin mount of each medal is worn in a straight line in the same row (the medals themselves may overlap). Medals and commendation bars are not worn on the same uniform. Recognition is accomplished through the wearing of either all medals or all commendation bars.

3. Ribbons, commendation bars, and medals received from another department or agency shall not be worn with Newport News Police Department uniforms.


Steven R. Drew
Chief of Police