



ADMINISTRATIVE MANUAL

ADM-280 – AWARDS & COMMENDATIONS

Amends/Supersedes: ADM-280 (10/04/2021)

Date of Issue: 02/10/2025

I. GENERAL

- A. The Newport News Police Department strives to recognize employees who, through their performance and actions, demonstrate excellence and commitment to the department, the community and the law enforcement profession. This policy establishes the process, criteria and procedures for awarding deserving employees such recognition.
- B. To coordinate the nomination process and make recommendations, the Chief of Police has established an awards Committee responsible for reviewing nominations and making recommendations to the Chief of Police.

II. DEFINITIONS, CRITERIA & GUIDELINES

- A. The following definitions are used for determining awards:
 - 1. Single acts or events refer to one event, incident or action.
 - 2. Overall performance refers to consistent performance over time.
 - 3. Performance of duties refers to actions that constitute the employee/volunteers' assigned duties and responsibilities.
 - 4. Exceptional performance refers to actions that exceed the expectations for assigned duties and responsibilities.
 - 5. Heroic actions refer to those in which the nominee showed extreme courage and knowingly risked their own life or limb.
 - 6. Dangerous conditions refer to situations with a substantial risk to life and safety.
 - 7. Unusual circumstances refer to situations not normally encountered during the course of one's duties and responsibilities.
- B. The Chief of Police makes the final decision to issue an award.
- C. All awards, apart from letters of commendation, are issued at the department awards ceremony.
- D. Unless specified in the award description, awards may be presented to multiple nominated and qualified candidates meeting the criteria.
- E. Before any award, other than a letter of commendation, is recommended to the Chief of Police, verification that the prospective awardee is not under a current administrative investigation for a major conduct or performance issue at the time of recommendation or award, is required.
 - 1. The recommendation may proceed if the administrative investigation relates to a firearm's discharge under the circumstances surrounding the nomination.
 - 2. The administrative investigation must be completed before an award is issued.
- F. Unless specified below, sworn members who receive an award will receive a commendation bar and approval to display it on their uniform.



III. COMMENDATIONS, RECOGNITION & AWARDS

A. Commendations

1. Commendation Letters

- a. A commendation letter recognizes employees (full-time and part-time) and volunteers for exceptional performance in a single act or event.
- b. Letters of commendation are issued by the Office of the Chief of Police at any time. Letters may be issued upon recommendation of the Awards Committee, the employee/volunteer's chain of command, an outside agency or a community member.
- c. The Office of the Chief of Police can issue any number of commendation letters in any given year.

2. Department Commendations

A department commendation recognizes individual employees or a unit that, in the performance of their duties, achieves any of the following:

- a. Takes impactful actions during a single act or event that demonstrate professionalism and excellence in law enforcement when faced with significant challenges and unusual circumstances.
- b. Takes specific actions that, through targeted efforts, reduce crime or other public safety hazards in the community.
- c. Identifies a specific problem in the community or department and implements specific strategies to address it.
- d. Throughout the year, exceptional performance demonstrates a dedication to the department that merits recognition.

B. Recognitions

During the annual awards ceremonies, employees may receive recognition for the following:

1. 25-Years of Service

Employees who achieve their 25th year of service to the department are recognized at the awards ceremony following their anniversary.

2. Outside Awards & Achievements

Employees who receive significant awards or those recognized for significant achievements by an organization (civic, professional, etc.) may request that their award be recognized at the awards ceremony following the award's presentation. This request is submitted to the Office of the Chief of Police.

C. Awards

1. Medal of Valor

- a. A Medal of Valor recognizes sworn officers who perform heroic actions during a single event under dangerous or life-threatening circumstances. The following conditions are required to merit this award:
 - 1) The officer's actions were sound and appropriate, given known information.
 - 2) The circumstances of the event were such that the officer's heroic actions were likely to result in death or serious injury.
- b. A Medal of Valor is awarded to individuals at the department awards ceremony.

2. Purple Heart

- a. A Purple Heart award is presented to any employee killed or seriously injured during a law enforcement action in the line of duty. The following conditions are required to merit this award:



- 1) The employee was injured or killed while on duty.
- 2) Injuries were sustained as the result of an intentional act instead of an accident.
- 3) The employee's actions were sound and appropriate, given known information.
- b. A Purple Heart is presented to individuals during the department awards ceremony. The award may be given posthumously and presented to the employee's next of kin.
3. Lifesaving Award
 - a. The Lifesaving Award is presented to employees whose direct, immediate action was taken in response to an individual in imminent danger of dying. The following conditions are required to merit this award:
 - 1) The employee's actions prolonged the individual's life, enabling them to be released from emergency medical care.
 - 2) The employee's actions were sound and appropriate, given known information.
 - b. The Lifesaving Award is presented to individuals during the department awards ceremony.
4. Meritorious Service Award
 - a. The Meritorious Service Award is presented to current employees whose exceptional, overall performance of their duties positively affected the department, their co-workers and the community.
 - b. The Meritorious Service Award may be presented to one sworn and one civilian employee at the department awards ceremony.
5. William F. Corvello Leadership Award
 - a. The William F. Corvello Leadership Award is presented to an employee whose overall performance and work ethic enables them to be a leader in police investigations.
 - b. This award is not eligible for nomination, as the Chief of Police selects the awardee.
 - c. The William F. Corvello Leadership Award is presented during the department awards ceremony. Only one award is presented in a calendar year.
6. George Austin Community Award
 - a. The George Austin Community Award is presented to an employee whose activities throughout the year make them a community role model. The employee's generous spirit and sharing efforts have improved the community's quality of life.
 - b. This award is not eligible for nomination, as the Chief of Police selects the awardee.
 - c. The George Austin Community Award is presented during the department awards ceremony. Only one award is presented in a calendar year.

IV. AWARDS COMMITTEE

- A. The department utilizes an awards committee to review nominations and recommend which the executive command staff should approve. The committee meets quarterly to review all new nominations.
- B. The Chief of Police will appoint a captain or assistant chief of police to serve as the Awards Committee chairperson. The chairperson is responsible for managing committee activities and membership.
- C. The committee consists of sworn and civilian representatives from the three department bureaus. Each member may serve for two years. At any given time, the committee may have ten to fifteen members. When a vacancy occurs, the chairperson solicits recommendations from the assistant police chiefs for committee members. Individuals are selected to ensure diversity on the committee, representing various employment statuses and division assignments. If needed, someone may also be appointed to a non-voting administrative position.



- D. Committee members must attend at least one meeting each calendar year. A quorum of seven voting members is needed for the committee to make recommendations to the Chief of Police.

V. PROCEDURE

A. Nomination Process

1. All employees can submit nominations by completing the appropriate application and submitting it to the nominee's chain of command:
2. The nominator will draft a To/From letter to the awards committee, which includes the following:
 - a. Identify which award the committee should consider for the employee(s).
 - b. If the nomination is for a single event, include the date, time, location and a description of the event and the employee(s) actions. If the nomination is for overall performance, include the employee's assignment.
 - c. Include information or examples that demonstrate the employee(s) meet the criteria for the specific award nomination.
 - d. Supporting documentation may be attached to the nomination.
3. The nominee's chain of command, through the division/precinct commander, will review the nomination and recommend whether it meets the criteria identified in this policy. For events involving officers from different units, the nomination form should go to primary responder's chain of command.
4. The precinct/division commander will forward all nominations to the Awards Committee chairperson.
5. At the quarterly meeting, the Awards Committee reviews all new nominations and, taking into consideration the recommendations from the employee's chain of command, makes a final recommendation:
 - a. Recognition is not recommended because the information in the nomination was insufficient, or the circumstances/performance did not meet the appropriate criteria.
 - b. Recognition as nominated is not recommended; however, if the circumstances/performance meet the criteria for a different type of recognition, update the nomination for the appropriate award.
 - c. Recognition is recommended.
6. After the meeting, recommendations for letters of commendation are submitted directly to the Office of the Chief of Police.
7. All other recommendations are held until the third quarter. Following the deadline provided by the Public Information Office (PIO), the committee will hold a pre-awards meeting to review all the recommendations.
8. The chair will present a summary of the nominations and recommendation forms to the Office of the Chief of Police. The executive command staff will review the recommendations and make the final decisions.
9. The Office of the Chief of Police will forward the summary form and nomination documents for those employees approved for recognition by the Chief of Police to the PIO.

B. Awards Ceremony

1. The department will hold an award ceremony, typically during the third quarter of each calendar year. The ceremony date depends on staff and venue availability.
2. The PIO is responsible for coordinating the ceremony, including reserving venues, coordinating speakers, preparing award materials and ordering awards. Once the ceremony date is confirmed, the



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PIO will provide the date and deadline for identification of awardees to ensure all materials are available for the ceremony.

3. The PIO will notify awardees that they are receiving awards and provide instructions for the ceremony.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven R. Drew", written over a horizontal line.

Steven R. Drew
Chief of Police