

**PREAMBLE:**

The Omaha Police Department (OPD) recognizes that its employees, both individually and as part of police units, perform commendable and honorable deeds, as well as acts of heroism and outstanding work that greatly exceed normal performance expectations. The OPD also recognizes that at times members of the public help Department employees in the performance of their duties through immediate and spontaneous assistance during times of need. This assistance, at times, is provided at considerable personal risk.

**POLICY:**

It is the policy of the Omaha Police Department (OPD) to recognize exceptional service and heroic actions by awarding employees with medals, ribbons, and/or other awards. The OPD may also recognize members of the public who significantly assist OPD employees with their duties. The OPD Merit Review/Awards Committee (MRAC) will review all nominations for recognition and submit its findings to the Chief of Police on a monthly basis.

**PROCEDURE:****I. Merit Review/Awards Committee (MRAC)**

- A. The MRAC members shall be selected by the Deputy Chief of the Professional Oversight Bureau (POB) in accordance with the criteria detailed in this policy. Whenever an opening on the MRAC occurs, an Information Order will be posted requesting an Inter-Office Communication from interested employees.
- B. The MRAC shall accept and review all Requests for Recognition ([OPD Form 82](#)) submitted through the chain of command as described in this policy.
- C. MRAC members will represent the diversity of employees of the OPD.
- D. The MRAC will be composed of the following:
  - 1. Chairperson: Deputy Chief of the POB, a non-voting member – except in the event that the MRAC does not reach a majority vote for a specific disposition. All awards will be approved by the Chairperson.
  - 2. Recording Secretary: The ESB (Executive Services Bureau) Administrative Assistant, a non-voting member, will act as recording secretary for the MRAC.
  - 3. Public Information Office (PIO) Representative: A PIO officer serves as a voting member.
  - 4. One Lieutenant serves as a voting member for a two-year term, with the option of term renewal.
  - 5. One Sergeant serves as a voting member for a two-year term, with the option of term renewal.
  - 6. One Police Officer serves as a voting member for a two-year term, with the option of term renewal.
  - 7. One Non-Sworn Employee (Manager or Non-Manager) serves as a voting member for a two- year term, with the option of term renewal.

- E. The MRAC will meet monthly, unless an insufficient number of Requests for Recognition ([OPD Form 82](#)) have been received by the meeting date.
- F. Requests for Recognition ([OPD Form 82](#)) will be forwarded to the MRAC Chairperson by the 21st day of each month and will be considered by the MRAC at the next scheduled meeting.
- G. Employees who submit Requests for Recognition ([OPD Form 82](#)) may, but are not required to, suggest a specific award. Suggestions will be taken into consideration by the command officers who subsequently review the request.
  - 1. The final determination of award type, if any, will be determined by the MRAC.

## II. Description of Awards (For more information, see [Appendix B](#))

### A. Medals

- 1. Medal of Valor: This is the highest award the OPD may bestow upon an employee who performs an exceptionally valorous act far above that which is normally expected, while aware of the imminent threat of personal danger to the employee. The Chief of Police, or designee, will present the Medal of Valor to employees who distinguish themselves by gallantry and courage at the risk of their own lives, above and beyond the call of duty, while displaying heroism in the face of extreme danger.
  - a. Employees who sacrifice their lives in the line of duty, and the circumstances indicate that an act of valor was performed in this action, will automatically be considered for a posthumous award of the Medal of Valor.
- 2. Purple Heart: The Chief of Police, or designee, will award the Purple Heart to employees who have suffered serious injuries during the performance of their duties which are likely to cause death or great bodily harm.

**EXAMPLES:** An officer is shot, stabbed, or otherwise seriously assaulted during the course of their duties.

  - a. The injuries must have been caused by a suspect.
  - b. Employees killed under these circumstances will be automatically considered for posthumous award of the Purple Heart.
- 3. Police Lifesaving Medal: The Chief of Police, or designee, will award the Police Lifesaving Medal to employees who rescue or endeavor to rescue any person from a life-threatening incident, which may include: active shooter, drowning, fire, or other extremely dangerous situations. Such endeavors should reflect risk of personal harm to the employee, and efforts/actions of employees which clearly went above and beyond the normal police function in safeguarding the lives of the public.
- 4. Police Blue Shield: The Chief of Police, or designee, may award the Police Blue Shield to employees who distinguish themselves by demonstrating bravery or heroism above and beyond the normal demands of duty, but to a lesser degree than required for the Medal of Valor.
- 5. Distinguished Service Medal: The Chief of Police, or designee, may award the Distinguished Service Medal to employees who perform meritorious and/or distinguished acts deserving honor, or who exhibit long-term exemplary performance of their duties.

- a. This medal may be awarded to employees at retirement for their exemplary service to the City over the course of their career.
6. Community Service Medal: The Chief of Police, or designee, may award the Community Service Medal to employees who, by virtue of sacrifice and expense of their time, fosters or contributes long-term to a valuable and successful program in the area of community service or affairs, or who acts to substantially improve police/community relations through contribution of time and effort when not involved in an official capacity.

**EXCEPTION:** Disobedience of orders or reckless conduct that exposed the employee and/or others to unacceptable risk will be considered as a reason for denial of a request for OPD awards.

## B. Ribbons

1. The Officer of the Year Ribbon: Awarded to officers who have been selected as the Crime Stoppers Officer of the Year or the Omaha Police Foundation Officer of the Year. This award is given based on the merit from the entire calendar year.
2. The Police Ribbon of Excellence: Awarded to employees who, in the performance of their duty, successfully develop or accomplish an administrative project or investigatory task in which the employee displayed exceptional initiative, tenacity, and expertise. The Police Ribbon of Excellence may be awarded:
  - a. When the employee's submission of an idea, device, or method has been adopted by the OPD, and has increased the administrative or operational efficiency of the OPD.
  - b. As a means of rewarding exemplary, continuous, long-term professionalism by an employee.
  - c. As acknowledgment of a supervisor or manager for significant actions, ideas, and/or progressive leadership that contributes to accomplishment of the goals of the OPD.

**EXAMPLE:** An employee who implements a new program or goes beyond that which is expected on a long-term case.
3. The Police Ribbon of Unit Excellence: Awarded to a unit, section, squad, or As-Needed Component (ANC) of OPD employees who, as a group, performed in a manner which, if performed by an individual, would merit recognition for quality service to the community for performance of duty or duties clearly above that which would normally be expected.
  - a. To justify this ribbon, the unit, section, team, or group must have further exhibited superior or outstanding performance over a period of time which:
    - (1) Is above and beyond that required by OPD policies.
    - (2) Occurred as a result of a coordinated and cumulative effort of all assigned members performing as a team.
  - b. The Police Ribbon of Unit Excellence award does not preclude separate awards to individual members for outstanding accomplishment during the unit's activities.

- c. The Police Ribbon of Unit Excellence will include only unit members who actively took part in the awarded project.
  - 4. Preservation of Life Ribbon: The Chief of Police, or designee, will award the Preservation of Life Ribbon to employees who utilize emergency measures to preserve or attempt to preserve human life during a potentially life-threatening incident, which may include: application of CPR, the Heimlich maneuver or a tourniquet, or another significant first aid measure. This award is intended for situations that do not present significant danger to the involved employee.
  - 5. Volunteer Service Ribbon: Awarded to an employee who, outside of the performance of their official duties, performs outstanding volunteer community service of a significant nature and whose example encourages others to get involved. This can include involvement with a local group that helps a specific population or organizing events that better the community.
- C. Letters.
- 1. Letter of Commendation Award. The Letter of Commendation Award is signed by the Chief of Police and is presented to an employee for an exceptional act and/or job performance which brings credit to the OPD and the employee, and is highly regarded by fellow employees and citizens as an outstanding example of police or police support work.
  - 2. Deputy Chief's Letter of Work Well Done: The Letter of Work Well Done is signed by a Deputy Chief of Police and is presented to an employee for quality service to the OPD and/or community for performance of duty or duties above which would be normally expected.
- D. Precinct/Section Level Recognition.
- 1. Captain's Letter of Work Well Done: Precinct/Section captains will prepare and sign a letter of recognition, using the same format as a Letter of Work Well Done, for employee's command/OPD Police Personnel Unit files which acknowledges their actions.
  - 2. Job Performance Recognition: A supervisor will complete a Sworn Personnel Supervisor Documentation of Job Performance Recognition ([OPD Form 13A](#)).
- E. Public Service Recognition.
- 1. Public Award of Appreciation: The Public Award of Appreciation is awarded to members of the public who distinguish themselves by displaying courage for commendable actions and sustaining life in a life-or-death situation. This is the highest award the OPD may bestow upon a citizen who performs an exceptionally valorous or sacrificial act far above that which is normally expected, or by providing an exceptional service to the OPD and/or the public at great personal sacrifice.
    - a. Citizens who give their lives and the circumstances indicate that an act of valor was performed in this action, may be considered for a posthumous Public Award of Appreciation.
    - b. The Public Award of Appreciation for distinguished acts is generally given in the form of an award plaque.

- c. The PIO is responsible for coordination of the presentation of Public Awards of Appreciation.
2. Public Letter of Appreciation: The Public Letter of Appreciation is signed by the Chief of Police and is awarded to members of the public who distinguish themselves by assisting employees of the OPD in the performance of their duties in a time of need, or with act(s) of support for the mission or goals of the OPD whether involving a specific incident or important long-term project.

**EXCEPTION:** Reckless conduct that exposed the citizen or others to unacceptable risk, or any form of criminal behavior by the citizen in the involved incident will be considered as a reason for denial of a request for any Public Award or Public Letter of Appreciation.

### III. Nomination Procedure

- A. The MRAC considers Requests for Recognition ([OPD Form 82](#)) during its monthly meetings.
  1. Each month, the MRAC will review and vote upon Requests for Recognition ([OPD Form 82](#)) received in the preceding month.
  2. Only Requests for Recognition ([OPD Form 82](#)) that were approved for presentation to the MRAC prior to the 21st of the preceding month will be presented to the committee for consideration.
- B. Any employee with knowledge of a specific, meritorious incident or act can initiate a request for employee recognition by completing a Request for Recognition form ([OPD Form 82](#)).
  1. The narrative portion of each request must contain all relevant facts that demonstrate conduct or acts performed by the specific person or unit nominated that would merit an individual and/or unit award, including an RB number, if applicable.
  2. Employees should refer to the criteria outlined in Section II, "Description of Awards" to recommend the appropriate level of recognition.
  3. Correspondence, such as Officer/Employee Commendation Forms or relevant emails, should be included with the request.

**NOTE:** No supplemental documentation, that is available electronically, is needed when submitting a Request for Recognition. The MRAC will view reports in RMS, if needed.

  4. Command Officers/Supervisors are encouraged to submit Requests for Recognition ([OPD Form 82](#)) for significant and/or meritorious acts performed by their subordinates.
- C. The completed Request for Recognition form ([OPD Form 82](#)) and all correspondence germane to the incident will be forwarded to the ESB, via the recommended employee's chain of command.
  1. Each supervisor/command officer in the recommended employee's chain of command will comment on the appropriateness of the request, indicate their respective approval or denial for the request in the space provided for their respective rank, and make a recommendation as to the appropriate award.
  2. Incomplete or inaccurate Requests for Recognition ([OPD Form 82](#)) will be returned to the originator of the request for corrections before the packet is forwarded further up the chain.

- a. Employees who submit recommendations (other than for unit awards) should refrain from simply writing one supporting narrative, using “cut and paste” techniques, and changing the names when recommending numerous employees. Each recommendation should be specific and stand on its own. Some elements of the incident description may be the same for each employee in large incidents, but no Request for Recognition ([OPD Form 82](#)) should duplicate text to cover the specific actions of more than just the recommended employee.
    - b. Requests for Recognition ([OPD Form 82](#)) that do not clearly reflect the individual conduct of an employee will not be acted on by the MRAC and will be returned to the person who submitted the request.
  3. Requests for Recognition ([OPD Form 82](#)) submissions may only be denied by the recommended employee’s Bureau Deputy Chief or the MRAC Chairperson.
    - a. Denied submissions will be returned to the originator via the chain of command. The person who denied the Request for Recognition ([OPD Form 82](#)) will provide a brief explanation and/or alternative suggestions.
  4. All approved Requests for Recognition ([OPD Form 82](#)) will be forwarded to the MRAC for further action.
- D. Requests from outside persons or organizations who wish to recommend a person for an award or other special recognition will be directed to the MRAC Chairperson, who will determine whether or not the request meets established criteria for an award.
1. If the MRAC Chairperson determines that the request meets the established criteria, the Chairperson will bring the incident to the attention of the employee’s immediate supervisor, who will then prepare the Request for Recognition ([OPD Form 82](#)) and locate any additional reports.
  2. If the person being recognized is a member of the public, the Chairperson will arrange to have an MRAC member prepare the reports and/or have the Backgrounds/Inspections Unit conduct additional follow-up as needed to determine if the award is warranted.

#### **IV. Merit Review/Awards Committee (MRAC) Procedures**

- A. All recommendations, internal and external, from the previous month will be collected and a copy distributed by the Recording Secretary for the MRAC to preview prior to the monthly meeting.
- B. Monthly meetings of the MRAC may be held in person or via email at the MRAC Chairperson’s discretion.
  1. At the monthly meeting, the MRAC will review all Requests for Recognition ([OPD Form 82](#)) on the agenda.
  2. If follow-up investigation on any Request for Recognition ([OPD Form 82](#)) is required, it will be the responsibility of the Chairperson, or designee, to return to the originating employee all reports, along with an Inter-Office Communication requesting further follow-up. This may also be accomplished via email.

- C. At the monthly meeting, the MRAC will evaluate the accepted Requests for Recognition ([OPD Form 82](#)) and vote on the appropriate level of recognition.
- D. OPD employees who receive recognition will be advised in a letter from their respective Bureau Command or Chief of Police. A copy of the letter will be placed in the recipient's command file, OPD Police Personnel Unit file, and a copy will be maintained by the ESB.
- E. After each MRAC meeting, a Personnel Order will be prepared by the Recording Secretary in order to announce awards and/or recognitions approved by the MRAC.
- F. Employees who are recommended for awards, but, in the judgment of the MRAC do not meet the criteria for an MRAC-level award may still be eligible for precinct/section-level recognition.
  - 1. The MRAC will return such recommendations to the precinct/section captain or non-sworn manager marked "Precinct/Section Level Recognition," "Job Performance Recognition," or "No Recommendation" for action by the precinct/section captain or non-sworn manager.
  - 2. Letters/memos generated at the precinct/section level will be placed in the employee's command file.

#### **V. Officer of the Month**

- A. Precinct/section captains may select an "Officer of the Month" from within their respective precinct/section. Captains will consult with supervisors and will consider all sworn employees deserving of recognition.

**NOTE:** Sworn Employee of the Month is a precinct level recognition. Nominations SHALL NOT be sent to the MRAC.

- B. OPD employees who are chosen as "Officer of the Month" will have their name and photograph posted in a prominent location in their precinct/section.

#### **VI. Non-Sworn Employee of the Month**

- A. Non-Sworn employees recommended for awards will be considered for "Non-Sworn Employee of the Month."
- B. The MRAC will evaluate all non-sworn employee recommendations at the monthly MRAC meeting and vote on a "Non-Sworn Employee of the Month."
- C. The ESB Administrative Assistant will publish the name of the "Non-Sworn Employee of the Month" in an OPD Personnel Order.
- D. A photo of the "Non-Sworn Employee of the Month" will be placed on the bulletin board at Central Police Headquarters (CPHQ).

#### **VII. Omaha Police Foundation's "Officer of the Year" Recognition**

- A. The Omaha Police Foundation's "Officer of the Year" Awards Luncheon is in recognition of those officers who have been selected to receive OPD medals or a Police Ribbon of Excellence during the preceding year.

**EXCEPTION:** Medals awarded as career achievement at retirement will be recognized at the employee's retirement ceremony.

- B. In January of each year, the Recording Secretary will provide all necessary information to the PIO to be disseminated for the Omaha Police Foundation's annual awards luncheon.
  - 1. All medals and Police Ribbons of Excellence approved in the preceding year will be presented to recipients at the annual awards luncheon.
    - a. Recipients of the Police Ribbon of Unit Excellence will not be recognized at the annual awards luncheon and will instead have their ribbons presented in a section/unit ceremony determined by the respective Bureau Deputy Chief.
  - 2. The "Officer of the Year" will be determined by the Omaha Police Foundation's Board of Directors and announced at the annual awards luncheon.

## **REFERENCES:**

### **I. Previous OPD Orders**

- A. Previous General Orders: #28-94, 4-95, 17-97, 16-00, 4-12, 58-14, 113-18, 25-20, 37-21, and 70-24.

### **II. Accreditation Standards**

- A. Relevant CALEA Accreditation Standards: 26.1.2.

### **III. Other**

- A. PPM Monthly Updates: #04-2018.