

## UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT - MEDALS, RIBBONS, PINS, AND ACCOUTREMENTS

### PREAMBLE:

The Omaha Police Department (OPD) takes great pride in the accomplishments and professional certification of its employees. Medals, ribbons, pins, and other accoutrements are established to recognize employees for their significant acts, specialized training and other significant employment milestones. It is crucial to the professionalism of the OPD to maintain a standardized and uniform appearance for all employees when wearing official OPD uniforms. In order to achieve this standardization and uniform appearance and to prevent the wearing of inappropriate and unapproved accoutrements, a formal policy is necessary.

### POLICY:

It is the policy of the Omaha Police Department (OPD) that only medals, ribbons, pins and any other accoutrements expressly authorized by the OPD shall be worn on OPD uniforms. All medals, ribbons, pins and accoutrements will be worn on official OPD uniforms only as prescribed in this policy.

### DEFINITIONS:

Accoutrements: Any item worn on an OPD uniform to include patches, pins, medals, and ribbons. Companion Equipment, Duty Gear and Equipment are not considered accoutrements.

Award Ribbons: Ribbons awarded through the Merit Review/Awards Committee process for excellence. Award Ribbons and the accompanying lapel pin are provided by the OPD at no cost to the recipient.

Medals: Medals awarded through the Merit Review/Awards Committee process. Medals and the accompanying ribbons and pins are provided by the OPD at no cost to the recipient.

Pins: Pin-on accoutrements that designate the wearer holds a specialty assignment, has unique training or has been awarded an OPD medal. Pins may be worn on the Standard Duty Uniform and on the Formal Duty Uniform. Lapel pins may be worn on Business Dress or Business Casual attire while on duty. Lapel pins may also be worn on other clothing while off duty.

Ribbons: Colored ribbons designating an assignment, award, certification, education, seniority, rank or other designated specialty. Ribbons shall be worn only on the Formal Duty Uniform.

### PROCEDURES:

#### I. Medals and Award Ribbons

- A. Medals and Award Ribbons are awarded to employees by the OPD for significant acts or accomplishments. All Medals and Award Ribbons are vetted through nomination to and selection by the Merit Review/ Awards Committee. See the OPD "Awards – Merit Awards and Performance Recognition Program" policy for medal and award criteria and nomination procedures.
- B. The OPD issues four Medals. Medals are provided by the OPD at no cost to the employee. See PPM [Appendix B](#) for a full description and depiction of each medal. In order of precedence, the medals are:
  1. The Medal of Valor is the highest award the OPD may bestow upon an employee.
  2. The Police Lifesaving Medal is the second highest award the OPD may bestow upon an employee.
  3. The Purple Heart is the third highest award the OPD may bestow upon an employee.

4. The Distinguished Service Medal is the fourth highest award the OPD may bestow upon an employee.
- C. The OPD issues four Award Ribbons. In order of precedence, they are:
1. The Preservation of Life Ribbon is the fifth highest award the OPD may bestow upon an employee.
  2. The Police Ribbon of Excellence is the sixth highest award the OPD may bestow upon an employee.
  3. The Police Ribbon of Unit Excellence is the seventh highest award the OPD may bestow upon an employee.
  4. The Volunteer Service Ribbon is the eighth highest award the OPD may bestow upon an employee.
- D. Wear of Medals and Award Ribbons
1. Recipients may wear the Medal of Valor with a neck ribbon around their neck while wearing the Formal Duty Uniform or with Business Dress attire, when appropriate.
  2. Recipients may wear the Police Lifesaving Medal, the Purple Heart and/or the Distinguished Service Medal pinned to the left breast pocket of the Formal Duty Uniform.
    - a. A single medal will be worn centered on the left breast pocket above the button.
    - b. If more than one medal is worn, they will be centered on the left breast pocket above the button, with the highest precedence ribbon worn closest to the center of the uniform (i.e., Police Lifesaving Medal worn closest to the center of the chest, followed by the Purple Heart with the Distinguished Service Medal worn closest to the left arm).
  3. Medal lapel pins will not be worn on any OPD Uniform. Medal lapel pins may be worn on Business Dress or Business Casual attire while on duty and may also be worn on other clothing while off duty.
  4. The cloisonné pin may be worn on the Standard Duty Uniform centered on the left pocket flap above the button. Recipients of more than one medal may only wear one cloisonné pin at a time. Cloisonné pins will not be worn on the Formal Duty Uniform as a ribbon representing the medal is worn in its place.
  5. Medal ribbons and Award Ribbons may be worn over the right pocket flap of the Formal Duty Uniform according to the order of precedence detailed below. Ribbons will not be worn on the Standard Duty Uniform. A star device (gold for command and silver for officers) will be worn centered on the ribbon to designate multiple awards (up to 4) of the same medal or award ribbon.

## **II. Ribbons**

- A. Ribbons are used for multiple purposes, including representing OPD Medals and Award Ribbons. Non-Award Ribbons are used to signify significant accomplishments of employees and/or, certifications held by an employee. Non-award ribbons may only be worn when the employee has earned the privilege by achieving the requirements for the ribbon. See [Appendix B](#) for a depiction of each ribbon.

- B. A supervisor holding the rank of Captain or higher must verify and authorize an employee to wear non-award ribbons.
1. Employees wishing to wear non-award ribbons must complete the OPD Ribbon Authorization/Order Form ([OPD Form 82A](#)) requesting authorization.
    - a. The request will be sent to the appropriate verifying units (Training and/or ERU) for verification of the employee's qualification for the requested ribbons. The verifying unit Lieutenant or other designated command officer will sign and return [OPD Form 82A](#) to the requesting employee.
    - b. Once the employee has obtained all the necessary verification signatures, the employee will send the [OPD Form 82A](#) to their Captain via the chain of command for further verification and approval.
    - c. Captains may rely on OPD databases for verification of an employee's qualification to wear a ribbon (such as Command or Police Service Ribbons). When an OPD database is used for verification purposes, the Captain will note on [OPD Form 82A](#) which database was used to verify the employee's qualification for the ribbon.
  2. Once reviewed and approved by a Captain, the original [OPD Form 82A](#) will be kept in the employee's Command File and a copy will be given to the employee.
    - a. To obtain the ribbon(s), employees will take the [OPD Form 82A](#) copy to the Police Supply Unit.
    - b. Police Supply Unit employees will verify [OPD Form 82A](#) has been properly signed and authorized. Once verified, a Police Supply Unit employee will sign OPD Form 82A which authorizes the purchase of the ribbons.
    - c. Employees will take the authorized [OPD Form 82A](#) to J.P. Cooke & Company and place the order for ribbons. Employees are responsible for the cost and delivery of the ribbons.
- C. Ribbons will only be worn on the Formal Duty Uniform. The wearing of ribbons is optional and all costs associated with the wearing of such ribbons are the responsibility of the individual employee.
1. Ribbons are worn centered directly over the right shirt pocket.
  2. Multiple ribbons shall be worn on a single ribbon holder designed to display the number of ribbons worn by the employee.
  3. When multiple ribbons are worn, the ribbons will be worn in order of precedence as follows:
    - a. The ribbon with the highest order of precedence will be on the top row of the ribbon holder and closest to the center of the uniform.
    - b. The next ribbon in order of precedence will be on the top row, directly to the right of the ribbon with higher precedence.
    - c. The third ribbon in order of precedence will be to the left of the center ribbon on the top row on the outer right side of the ribbon holder.

- d. Additional ribbons will follow the same order of precedence pattern on a separate row. No more than three ribbons shall be worn on any row. When the total number of ribbons is not divisible by three, the lower rows shall hold three ribbons and the top row shall hold one or two ribbons.
- D. Professional Ribbons. Employees who have achieved professional education, rank and/or levels of service may wear an authorized ribbon. Stars are worn to signify different levels associated with the ribbon. Stars will be worn centered on the ribbon. A list of OPD authorized Professional Ribbons is located in [Appendix B](#).
- E. Bureau/Section/Unit Ribbons. Employees who are assigned or have previously been assigned to certain bureaus, sections, units or teams are authorized to wear a Unit Ribbon. A list of OPD authorized Unit Ribbons is located in [Appendix B](#).
- F. Certification/Qualification Ribbons. Employees who have received official certification or qualification in designated areas may wear the corresponding ribbons. Employees certified as instructors in the designated area will wear a silver “I” device centered on the ribbon. A list of OPD authorized Certification/Qualification Ribbons is located in [Appendix B](#).
- G. Ribbons will be worn on the Formal Duty Uniform according to the Order of Precedence chart located in [Appendix B](#).
  - 1. The order of precedence for certification/qualification ribbons was selected randomly and is strictly for uniformity to assist officers in assembling their multiple ribbon holders.
  - 2. The order of precedence for certification/qualification ribbons is not meant to prescribe an order of importance of any certification over another certification.
  - 3. The original order of precedence for certification/qualification ribbons approved for wear was established per OPD General Order #09-14. Subsequently approved certification/qualification ribbons will be added chronologically to the original order of precedence based on the approval date.
- H. Additional ribbons may become authorized after approval of the Uniform and Equipment Committee and the Chief of Police. When approved, these additional ribbons will be added to the list of authorized pins located in [Appendix B](#).
  - 1. The location and order for the wearing of these additional ribbons on OPD uniforms will be detailed in [Appendix B](#).

### **III. Pins**

- A. Only authorized pins may be worn on OPD uniforms.
  - 1. All authorized pins may be worn on the Standard Duty Uniform.
  - 2. All authorized pins with the exception of cloisonné pins may be worn on the Formal Duty Uniform.
- B. Pins that represent special assignments or training must be authorized by the Chief of Police and authorized via the Uniform and Equipment Committee procedures.
  - 1. A list and depiction of all authorized pins is located in [Appendix B](#).

2. Additional pins may become authorized after approval of the Uniform and Equipment Committee and the Chief of Police. When approved, these additional pins will be added to the list of authorized pins located in [Appendix B](#).
    - a. The location and order for the wearing of these additional pins on OPD uniforms will be detailed in [Appendix B](#).
- C. Two types of pins are authorized to be worn on the Standard Duty Uniform and the Formal Duty Uniform. All pins are optional. Pins may be worn on the Standard Duty Uniform and Formal Duty Uniform with the exception of the medal cloisonné pin which may only be worn on the Standard Duty Uniform.
1. Lapel Pins. Lapel pins are small metal pins with a single clutch-type post attachment on the back.
    - a. American Flag Pin. This pin may be worn by any employee wearing any official OPD uniform. The pin will be a depiction of the American Flag only. The flag displayed on any other item is not authorized.
      - (1) The American Flag lapel pin, when worn on the Standard Duty Uniform, shall be affixed on the left shirt pocket cover, centered between the pocket button and the left side of the pocket.
      - (2) The American Flag lapel pin, when worn on the Formal Duty Uniform, shall be affixed on the right shirt pocket cover, centered between the pocket button and the right side of the pocket.
        - (a) This placement allows for the wearing of OPD medals on the left pocket cover of the Formal Duty Uniform.
    - b. Certification or Qualification lapel pins. These pins are approved by the Uniform and Equipment Committee and the Chief of Police. See [Appendix B](#) for a list of authorized pins. Certification/ Qualification lapel pins, when worn, shall be affixed on the right shirt pocket cover, centered between the pocket button and the left side of the pocket. Only one certification/qualification lapel pin may be worn at a time.
  2. Unit and Certification/Qualification Pins. These pins are larger than lapel pins, made of metal and may have one or more clutch-type post attachments on the back.
    - a. Air Support Unit Wings. This pin may be worn by officers currently assigned to the Air Support Unit.
    - b. Motor Squad Wings. This pin may be worn by officers currently assigned to the Motor Squad.
    - c. Mounted Patrol Squad Calvary Sabers. This pin may be worn by officers currently assigned to the Mounted Patrol Squad.
    - d. Other Unit and Certification/Qualification Pins may be submitted to the Uniform and Equipment Committee and approved by the Chief of Police. See [Appendix B](#) for a full list and depiction of approved pins as well as which employees are authorized to wear the pins.
    - e. Wings and Sabers pins will be worn centered horizontally directly above the right pocket flap or ribbon holder. Other Unit and Certification/Qualification pins are

worn centered horizontally above the right pocket flap and centered vertically between the top of the pocket flap and shoulder epaulet band. When multiple pins are worn, the following rules for wear apply:

- (1) Wings and Sabers pins are worn closest to the top of the pocket flap or ribbon holder.

**NOTE:** As Wings and Sabers are unit of assignment pins, they cannot be worn on any OPD uniform at the same time.

- (2) Other pins will be worn above Wings and Sabers or the ribbon holder. See [Appendix B](#) for the authorized order of wear of non-Wings and Sabers pins.

#### **IV. Other Accoutrements**

- A. **Black Mourning Band:** A black mourning band may be worn over the badge to show respect for officers who have been killed in the line of duty. Officers may wear a black mourning band on the following occasions:
  1. When an OPD officer is killed in the line of duty, fellow officers may wear the black mourning band immediately after the death and for up to thirty (30) days after the date of the funeral.
  2. When an officer of a law enforcement agency immediately adjacent to the OPD is killed in the line of duty, officers may wear the black mourning band immediately after the death and for up to thirty (30) days after the date of the funeral.
  3. When an active officer of the OPD dies of natural causes, officers may wear the black mourning band while in uniform and on the day of the funeral of the deceased.
  4. On Police Memorial Day, May 15 of each year, 0001 hours to 2359 hours, officers may wear the black mourning band to appropriately show a commitment to police officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

**NOTE:** Black mourning bands will not be worn for any other occasion unless directed by the Chief of Police or their designee.

- 5. The mourning band shall be worn over the Omaha Police badge, slanted from upper shoulder side to lower center of the chest side of the badge.
  - a. The intent is for the mourning band to represent the crossing of the heart with the band oriented at the same angle as the right forearm when the right hand is placed over the heart.
- B. **Whistle Chain:** A whistle chain will be worn by members of the Traffic Unit. The whistle chain is optional for members of the Mounted Patrol Squad and Bicycle Patrol officers.
  1. The whistle chain will be worn attached to the uniform shirt's right shoulder epaulet and will lead to the right shirt pocket. The whistle will be carried inside the pocket.

#### **REFERENCES:**

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

- A. Previous OPD General Orders include #15-82, 41-83, 86-88, 82-89, 131-89, 53-90, 5-93, 10-93, 2-94, 1-95, 62-97, 2-11, 40-13, 9-14 and 25-20.
- B. The previous OPD Information Order is #15-95.

## **II. Accreditation Standards**

- A. CALEA Accreditation standard 41.3.4 is relevant to this policy.