

1.715 AWARDS & COMMENDATIONS

(26.1.2)

The agency's awards and commendations program is established to honor individuals, units, groups, or other entities who make outstanding contributions toward fulfilling the mission of the agency through their acts of valor or merit and do so at levels beyond that which is normally expected of employees or citizens.

1.715.02 Awards Committee *(revised 12/17/19)*

- A. The Awards Committee is a standing committee of the agency that is chaired by the Chief of Police.
 - 1. Committee members include, at a minimum:
 - a. Chief of Police;
 - b. Executive Administrative Assistant of Public Safety; and
 - c. Commander of the Administrative & Technical Services Division.
 - 2. The Chief may solicit volunteers for committee membership or request commanders provide names of prospective committee members.
- B. The Chief appoints committee members to terms of at least two years.
 - 1. Committee membership terms ordinarily run July through June.
 - 2. Promotions or transfers of committee members will not affect the status of their committee memberships unless they are transferred to different commands in which cases their committee memberships will end.
 - 3. Committee vacancies will be filled at the discretion of the Chief.
 - 4. Committee members will be compensated for committee activities consistent with their Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) status.
- C. Duties and responsibilities of the committee chair include, but are not limited to:
 - 1. Calling, coordinating, scheduling, and announcing committee meetings;
 - 2. Ensuring award and commendation nominations are actively solicited from the agency and the community;
 - 3. Presiding over committee meetings;
 - 4. Ensuring the results of deliberations are accurately recorded and reported.
 - 5. Ensuring a quorum of at least two-thirds of committee members is in attendance in order to take action on award nominations;
 - 6. Ensuring nominations are considered based narrowly and specifically on published award criteria;
 - 7. Ensuring that nominations coming from within the agency are submitted through the chain of command;
 - 8. Setting dates, times, and locations of award programs;
 - 9. Ensuring proper planning and coordination of award programs; and
 - 10. Ensuring documents corroborating awards and commendations are placed in employees' personnel files.

1.715.04 Submitting Nominations *{Revised 3/1/21}*

- A. Nominations coming from within the agency must be submitted in memo format through the chain of command to the Awards Committee chair.
- B. All employees, to include committee members, who have direct knowledge of meritorious actions, are responsible for submitting award nominations.
- C. Employees may submit nominations on their own behalf.
- D. Nominations will be clearly and concisely written, free of police jargon and excessive superlatives, and must contain information that includes, but is not limited to:
 - 1. Detailed statements of fact applicable to the acts, including those that may not be contained in original reports;

2. Diagrams, drawings, photographs, or other depictions if writers believe such additions would be useful to the committee;
 3. Brief statements as to why persons submitting nominations believe nominees should earn awards; and
 4. Attachments of any corroborating reports, newspaper articles, witness statements, or reports from other agencies.
- E. Reports must substantiate award criteria.
- F. Facts stated in reports cannot be changed or altered by verbiage contained in award nominations.
- G. Nominations must be submitted within SIX MONTHS of incidents.
1. Supervisors and commanders are responsible for reviewing, commenting on, and endorsing either positively or negatively the nominations submitted to them prior to forwarding nominations through the chain of command.
 2. Once nominations have been initiated, they should be endorsed and forwarded to the next level within five working days. When requested by superiors, endorsements will contain accurate, factual reasons for any delays.
 3. Nomination endorsements will be submitted in memo format.
 - a. Endorsements will be attached to the front of original nominations.
 - b. Nominations received without endorsements will not be considered.
 4. Employees submitting nominations may submit courtesy copies for informational purposes, with "cc" indicated thereon, directly to the Awards Committee chair.
- H. Award nominations received from persons outside the agency may be referred to nominated employees' commanders for investigation, documentation, and submission to the committee.

1.715.06 Committee Actions & Deliberations

- A. The Awards Committee is responsible for reviewing all award nominations and supporting documents and comparing information contained therein with award criteria in order to make award recommendations.
- B. Except for discretionary authority granted to the Chief, committee members are the sole judges as to the meanings and interpretations of award criteria and the applicability of the criteria to particular award nominations.
- C. The committee will consider duty assignments, assignment requirements, and nominees' specialties and expected or required performance when deliberating award nominations.
- D. The committee chair:
1. Will ensure that the committee does not deliberate or act upon nominations that involve incidents under active internal investigation; and
 2. May table or vacate committee recommendations if the committee recommends or approves awards that do not meet, or are inconsistent with, published criteria.
- E. The committee will attempt to arrive at commendation recommendations on a consensus basis. However, if consensus cannot be arrived at, simple majority votes will ratify all commendation recommendations except for the Medal of Honor which can be ratified only on votes of at least two-thirds of those committee members present and voting.
- F. Except for group related awards or commendations, committee members will be excused from voting when they are nominated parties. Committee members need not be excused from discussions and votes when they nominated other individuals or endorsed nominations.
- G. Only one award will be presented to an individual employee for any applicable incident or action. Only the highest award possible will be presented. Lesser-included actions will not be separately awarded.
- H. Awards may be presented to living or deceased employees so long as their actions meet published award criteria and limitations.

- I. The committee will notify nominating individuals whether submitted nominations will not receive further consideration or are meritorious and warrant formal recommendations to the Chief.
- J. Nominating individuals have 30 days to file written appeals to the chair of the Awards Committee upon being informed that the committee has recommended not granting awards or commendations. Appeals must be based only on new, but not previously available information.
- K. The actions, deliberations, and files of the Awards Committee are confidential consistent with **1.652 Confidentiality**.

1.715.08 Medal of Honor (Gold Medal)

- A. The awarding of the Medal of Honor must be strictly limited in order to protect the integrity of the commendation.
- B. Medals may be awarded to employees who:
 - 1. Unavoidably, and with knowledge of risks, find themselves in danger so extreme that death or serious injuries are predictable or reasonably expected; and
 - 2. Place themselves in danger or jeopardy, wherein any alternative courses of action would not have caused criticism for lack of courage or dedication to duty; and
 - 3. Commit themselves to action and were successful in completing their objectives, unless physically unable to do otherwise; and
 - 4. Act when there were no other reasonable, safer ways to accomplish their objectives; and
 - 5. Meet the criteria for Bravery and Valor.
- C. Medals will not be awarded to employees when:
 - 1. They were placed in jeopardy solely as the result of surprise attacks;
 - 2. They were not successful in completing their objectives if physically able to do so;
 - 3. Reports do not contain facts supporting nominations;
 - 4. They deliberately violated safety procedures or directives by their conduct;
 - 5. They exposed themselves to danger without due care; or
 - 6. They irresponsibly endangered the lives of others by their actions, or caused injuries to innocent, uninvolved persons.
- D. Medals will not be awarded posthumously if deaths result from:
 - 1. Routine workplace or traffic accidents;
 - 2. Illness from heart attacks, strokes, or other illnesses not directly related to police activities; or
 - 3. Personal disagreements with others.
- E. Recipients will receive Medals of Honor, citation bars, and certificates.
- F. Citation bars have four gold colored segments with gold tone section separators.

1.715.10 Medal of Bravery (Silver Star Medal)

- A. Medals of Bravery may be awarded to employees who:
 - 1. Were engaged in law enforcement activities, enforcing criminal laws, or maintaining the public peace; and
 - 2. Had no other readily apparent recourses for successful performance of their activities; and
 - 3. Knowingly and voluntarily exposed themselves to danger; and
 - 4. Were in danger such that death or serious injuries, while not expected, was highly or realistically possible.
- B. Medals of Bravery may be awarded for lifesaving efforts by employees when:
 - 1. They had no other reasonable ways to effect or attempt lifesaving efforts; and
 - 2. Immediate and positive actions had to be taken; and
 - 3. They would have not been criticized had they undertaken different actions; and
 - 4. They endured great physical discomfort during their efforts.
- C. Medals will not be awarded to employees when:
 - 1. Reports do not contain facts supporting nominations;

2. They deliberately violated safety procedures or directives by their conduct;
3. They expose themselves to danger without due care; or
4. They irresponsibly endangered the lives of others by their actions, or caused injuries to innocent, uninvolved persons.

D. Recipients will receive, citation bars, and certificates.

E. Citation bars have four silver colored segments with gold tone section separators.

1.715.12 Medal of Merit

A. Medals of Merit may be awarded to employees for the purpose of recognizing outstanding, meritorious achievement which reflects credit on recipients or the agency through the:

1. Solution of particular crimes;
2. Apprehension of particular offenders;
3. Attempts to save the lives of others; or
4. Development, initiation, or conduct of innovative operational, administrative, or support programs within the agency.

B. Recipients will receive, citation bars, and certificates.

C. Citation bars have four red colored segments with gold tone section separators.

1.715.14 Purple Heart

A. Purple Heart Commendations may be awarded to employees who sustain death, serious injuries, or serious illnesses as result of:

1. Conflicts with dangerous suspects;
2. Attempts to save lives of others, regardless of the outcomes of the attempts;
3. Accidents occurring during the direct performance of non-routine duties; or
4. Serious or life threatening illnesses clearly resulting from the direct performance of duties.

B. Commendations will not be awarded to employees when:

1. Reports do not contain facts supporting nominations;
2. They are injured as the result of carelessness, ineptness, personal disagreements with others, or preventable workplace or vehicle accidents;
3. They deliberately violated safety procedures or directives by their conduct;
4. They exposed themselves to danger without due care; or
5. Except as otherwise determined by the Awards Committee, employees suffering heart attacks, strokes, pneumonia, diabetic coma, or other physical illnesses or dysfunctions.

C. Recipients will receive, citation bars, and certificates.

D. Citation bars have four purple colored segments with gold tone section separators.

1.715.16 Chief's Award for Excellence

A. The Chief's Award for Excellence may be awarded only by the Chief to employees for the purpose of recognizing outstanding, meritorious achievement that reflects credit on the recipients or the agency.

B. The Chief has the sole discretion to designate award winners with or without input from others, but may accept the recommendations of others.

C. The Awards Committee does not act or vote on the Chief's Award.

D. Recipients will receive citation bars, and certificates.

E. Citation bars have four black colored segments with gold tone section separators.

1.715.18 Unit Citation

A. Unit Citations may be awarded to units within the organization for the purpose of recognizing outstanding, superior, meritorious achievements, or major accomplishments by all unit members that reflect credit on recipients or the agency during a calendar year.

- B. Recipients will receive citation bars and certificates.
- C. Citation bars have four light blue segments with gold tone separators.

1.715.20 Major Incident Citation

- A. Major Incident Citations may be awarded to agency employees who provided professional services during times of crisis or unusual occurrences that significantly impacted the agency and university community.
- B. Nominations must demonstrate that:
 - 1. Incidents significantly tested the resources of the agency;
 - 2. The agency's response must have been unique and throughout the community; and
 - 3. Nominees must have worked during the incidents.
- C. Recipients will receive citation bars and certificates.
- D. Citation bars have four white segments with gold tone separators.

1.715.22 Special Olympics Citation

- A. Special Olympics Citations are awarded to employees who in their off-duty time volunteer with recognized or officially sanctioned Special Olympics events such as Torch Runs, Polar Bear Plunges, etc., but not by donating money or purchasing merchandise.
- B. Participation may be demonstrated through documentation provided by the Special Olympics to the volunteers
- C. Employees who volunteer with the Special Olympics will receive citation bars and certificates.
- D. Citation bars:
 - 1. Have three segments with gold tone separators, with black end segments, and a yellow center segment with the year in black; and
 - 2. May be worn until the MD Special Olympic Games are held the following year.

1.715.24 Physical Fitness Citation

- A. Physical Fitness Citations are awarded to employees who pass yearly physical fitness examinations that have performance requirements adjusted by age and gender.
- B. Performance requirements, testing dates, and locations will be published in Training Bulletins.
- C. Employees who pass the physical fitness exams will receive citation bars and certificates.
- D. Citation bars:
 - 1. Have three segments with gold tone separators, with black end segments, and a yellow center segment with the word "fitness" in black; and
 - 2. May be worn until testing is concluded the following year.

1.715.40 Community Policing Citation

- A. Community Policing Citations may be presented to employees or units who complete successful or innovative projects that are directly related to the university community or groups of citizens within the community and pertain to:
 - 1. Community policing;
 - 2. Problem solving;
 - 3. Crime suppression, reduction, or enforcement; or
 - 4. Traffic safety or enforcement.
- B. Nominations must document the projects':
 - 1. Development and establishment of goals;
 - 2. Methods used to measure results and determine if the projects were successful;
 - 3. Use of resources;
 - 4. Interactions between employees and the community;
 - 5. Other relevant information; and

- 6. Successful outcomes.
- C. Recipients will receive citation bars and certificates.
- D. Citation bars have four yellow segments with gold tone separators.

1.715.42 Certificate of Appreciation

- A. Certificates of Appreciation may be awarded to employees for the purpose of recognizing:
 - 1. Intelligence that reflects a highly creditable police accomplishment;
 - 2. Perseverance and devotion to duty;
 - 3. On-duty involvement in youth activities, crime prevention activities, victim-witness assistance, or other similar activities for the public good;
 - 4. Off-duty involvement in charitable fundraising efforts, social, religious, fraternal, or other similar activities for the public good; or
 - 5. Acts which result in the prevention or solution of crimes, but where circumstances do not merit the issuance of other agency awards.
- B. Recipients will receive certificates.

1.715.44 Employee of the Quarter {Revised 3/1/21}

- A. The Chief may designate an Employee of the Quarter for the purpose of recognizing outstanding, meritorious achievement that reflects credit on the recipients or the agency.
- B. The Chief has the sole discretion to designate award winners FROM NOMINATIONS RECEIVED BY THE NOMINATING DEADLINE.
- C. NOMINATIONS FOR THE QUARTER MUST BE SUBMITTED, VIA THE CHAIN OF COMMAND OF THE SUBMITTING MEMBER, TO THE CHIEF'S OFFICE NO LATER THAN THE 15TH OF THE MONTH IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE END OF THE MOST RECENT QUARTER.
- D. The Awards Committee does not act or vote on the Employee of the Quarter.
- E. An employee's designation as Employee of the Quarter does not preclude the employee's actions being considered by the Awards Committee for other agency awards and commendations.
- F. Recipients will receive certificates.

1.715.46 Distinguished Citizen Commendation

- A. Distinguished Citizen Commendations may be awarded to members of the community who:
 - 1. Provide courageous assistance to the agency during incidents wherein suspects are detained until the arrival of police officers; or
 - 2. Provide exceptional efforts or who significantly contribute to the operations, administration, or support of the agency.
- B. Recipients will receive certificates.

1.715.48 Appurtenance

- A. Stars affixed to citation bars will indicate multiple awards of medals. Each star will represent a successive award.
- B. A maximum of four stars may be affixed to each citation bar representing a total of five awards per bar.

1.715.50 Wearing Awards & Commendations

- A. Agency medals and citation bars will be worn consistent with **1.504.02 Awards & Commendations**.
- B. Employees previously awarded other versions of medals and citation bars will, after providing documentation of previous awards, be presented with the current version of the citation bar and will wear only that current version.

1.715.52 Awards by External Organizations

- A. The agency will nominate employees eligible for recognition by external organizations such as the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA), Red Cross, Rotary Club, Lions Club, Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS), Sunpapers, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), etc.
- B. Employees will submit the award nomination criteria and related information to the Awards Committee chair.
- C. The Awards Committee chair will ensure that external organization award opportunities are appropriately publicized through the agency.
 - 1. Nominations will be made consistent with **1.715.04 Submitting Nominations**.
 - 2. The agency's decision to nominate employees for external organization awards will be made by the Awards Committee consistent with **1.715.06 Committee Actions & Deliberations**.
 - 3. Permission to wear any related citation bars, pins, etc. as the result of awards made by external organizations will be granted on a case-by-case basis by the Chief consistent with **1.504.02 Awards and Commendations**.
 - 4. Employees may accept any monetary components of awards from external organizations made as the result of departmentally sanctioned nominations.
- D. Employees receiving awards from external organizations without the benefit of departmentally sanctioned nominations may submit the award information to the Awards Committee chair who will, in consultation with the Awards Committee, determine any necessary or appropriate agency response.

1.715.54 Appreciation Letters From Citizens

- A. Routine letters from citizens appreciating or commending the efforts of agency employees will be responded to at the direction of the Chief without the involvement of the Awards Committee. Copies of related correspondence and documents will be forwarded to involved officers and their supervisors and commanders and placed in employees' supplemental personnel files.
- B. Employees or their supervisors or commanders who believe that citizens' letters appreciating or commending agency employees warrants further consideration by the committee may submit same to the Awards Committee along with nomination forms as any other nomination.