



DEPARTMENT COMMENDATIONS

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I. POLICY & PURPOSE

The Anne Arundel County Police Department expects a high level of professional conduct from members of the department. When members exceed the standards of the department, it is appropriate for them to be commended. The official commendation of such performance and the arrangement of appropriate publicity are provided by the department to give full public recognition to those who have brought honor to themselves and to the department.

II. COMMENDATION BOARD

The Commendation Board consists of at least eight (8) members who are appointed by the Chief of Police. The Board meets periodically and considers all recommendations for commendations. The Commendation Board is given access to all information regarding each recommendation, and may investigate the circumstances surrounding the recommendation in any manner it deems necessary. The Commendation Board forwards all recommendations and the results of their investigations to the Chief of Police.

The chairperson of the Commendation Board will be identified via inter-office correspondence to all personnel by the Media Relations Office at least once annually and/or upon a change in the position.

III. DEPARTMENT COMMENDATIONS

A. The Distinguished Officer Award

The Distinguished Officer Award is awarded by the County Executive to an officer whose performance of duty during a specific police action is exceptional. The award consists of a "Distinguished Service" shoulder patch, worn on the right shoulder of the uniform, and may include a monetary award provided by the county government. A certificate accompanies the award.

B. Department Medal of Honor

The Department Medal of Honor is awarded when an officer, in the line of duty, performs an act of extraordinary heroism or bravery involving death, personal injury, or risk of imminent personal danger to life, in direct combat or in saving or attempting to save or rescue the life of another with knowledge of the danger assumed. The Department Medal of Honor may be awarded posthumously.

The Department Medal of Honor ribbon is dark blue, light blue, and white.

 **C. Department Silver Star Award**

The Department Silver Star Award may be awarded for:

1. An act of extraordinary police work involving grave personal danger, protecting the life of another, or effecting arrest where circumstances indicate that firearms or other deadly weapons could have been used against the member;
2. An act of courage involving personal risk to one's self while protecting or saving the life of another.

The Department Silver Star ribbon is blue and silver.

 **D. Department Commendation Award**

The Department Commendation Award may be awarded for:

1. An arrest of an armed adversary not necessarily at imminent risk to life, or under direct combat;
2. An act of extraordinary intelligence reflecting highly credible police accomplishment and displaying perseverance and devotion to duty, which results in the prevention or solution of a crime or act and apprehension of those responsible;
3. Saving the life of another without personal risk to one's self;
4. An arrest culminating in clearing one or more of a series of important cases through diligent investigation, alertness, and professional skill.

The Department Commendation ribbon is white, red, and blue.

 **E. Purple Heart Award**

The Purple Heart award is presented by the Chief of Police to a sworn member who is wounded by a weapon in the performance of his/her duty.

The Purple Heart ribbon has a light blue background with red and white stripes.

 **F. Chief's Award for Job Excellence**

The Chief's Award for Job Excellence is given to sworn or civilian members who the Chief of Police determines have performed their assigned tasks in a manner above and beyond the written job description. The recipients of this award are selected directly by the Chief of Police – not through the Commendation Board.

The Chief's Award for Job Excellence ribbon has a dark blue background, with light blue stripes.

 **G. Department Unit/Section Citation**

The Department Unit/Section Citation is presented by the Chief of Police for those situations in which an entire Unit or Section, by displaying an extraordinary degree of teamwork, has made a significant contribution to the department's mission. The Department Unit/Section Citation may be awarded for:

1. An act of extraordinary police work, from a group of individuals in a particular Unit/Section that results in the prevention or solution of a crime or act and apprehension of those responsible.
2. An arrest culminating in the clearance of one or more important cases through the diligent investigation, alertness, and professional skill of a combined group of individual officers.
3. Activities, which have made a significant contribution to the Department's mission and to enhancing community welfare such as major crime prevention endeavors.

Those activities or actions cited should have occurred in the current calendar year, but may be submitted no later than February 21st of the next calendar year. Any supporting statistical information should also be based on the current calendar year; however, the Board chairperson retains the authority to consider exceptions.

The Department Unit/Section Citation ribbon is blue with red and white stripes. The Unit/Section Award also consists of a certificate embossed with a gold seal. Each member involved in the particular act will be named in the certificate and a letter of commendation is placed in each member's personnel file.

 **H. Community Service Award**

The Community Service Award is presented by the Chief of Police for those situations in which an officer or a group of officers makes a significant difference in improving the quality of life for the citizens, the community or the neighborhood they serve.

The Community Service Award may be awarded for:

1. The development, organization, and management of a unique program specifically designed to provide the community with a service that was not previously available. Such a program will have made a significant impact upon the community or its residents by further enhancing their quality of life.
2. The consistent resolution of community conflict or problems by an individual officer. Such an officer would consistently demonstrate the ability to identify problems and seek appropriate solutions through his or her own creativity or the use of other resources. The actions of this officer will have made significant impact on the community or its residents by enhancing their quality of life.
3. The active participation of an individual officer in community events or services not directly associated with his or her employment as a police officer. The actions of this officer will have made a significant impact on the community or its residents by enhancing their quality of life.

The Community Service Award ribbon has a red background with blue and white stripes.

 **I. Youth Service Award**

The Youth Service Award is presented by the Chief of Police to the officer(s) or civilian(s) employee who provide a service(s) or resources(s) to a child or children (less than 18 years of age), that significantly impacts their quality of life or that of the child's family. The officer's actions may be enforcement, social or communal. The contribution of support to the child must be well documented occurrences to one child, support to multiple children or a combination thereof. The recipient(s) of this award is selected directly by the Chief of Police. Examples of criteria warranting merit include but are not limited to:

1. The employee creates a significant program or activity that was not previously available to specifically benefit youth. The coordination of the activities or programs can be experts from a profession with a skill set that the employee may not possess.
2. The employee participates in activities or events to benefit youth that is not directly related to the employee's regular normal duties and responsibilities.
3. The participation of the employee displays great personal sacrifice to assist youth and or a youth organization. The sacrifice can be time, financial, resources or expertise of a given skill.

The Youth Service Award ribbon is light blue with purple, white, and black stripes.

 **J. Police Officer/Employee of the Year Award**

The Police Officer/Employee of the Year Award is presented by the Chief of Police to those officers/employees who have performed at the highest level of expectations throughout a particular calendar year. Nominees for the award must be recognized by their chain of command, with well-documented performance achievements.

Each year, Commanders of the following components will approve of one officer/employee and/or detective within their command to be officially recognized and receive the department award at the annual banquet: Northern District, Eastern District, Southern District, Western District, Special Operations Division, Criminal Investigations Division, *Arundel Mills Entertainment District (AMED)*, Community Relations Division (*not including AMED*), Training Division, Technical Services Division, and the Communications Section. Each District will approve one officer/employee of the year and one detective of the year. Commanders will submit their supporting documentation to the Commendation Board Chairman by February 21st of the subsequent year.

Non-sworn employees in a non-uniform assignment will be presented with a Department Certificate in lieu of the ribbon.

The Police Officer/Employee of the Year Award ribbon is blue with light blue, white, and black stripes.

 **K. Patrol Officer of the Month and Officer/Sergeant of the Quarter Award**

Patrol Officers of the Month: The Patrol Officer of the Month Award is presented to those patrol officers who have performed at the highest level of expectations throughout a particular month and/or is recognized for an exceptional event, investigation or apprehension. Patrol Officers of the month are nominated by platoon commanders and each month the District Commander will select a patrol officer for their district. Only patrol officers assigned to Platoons 1, 2, 3 and 4 are eligible to receive this award.

Officers/Detectives of the Quarter: The Officer/Detective of the Quarter is presented to those officers/detectives who have performed at the highest level of expectations throughout a particular quarter and/or are recognized for an exceptional event, investigation or apprehension. Each Patrol District Commander, the Community Relations Division Commander and the Criminal Investigations Division Commander will select an Officer/Detective of the quarter from their respective Districts/Divisions.

Sergeants of the Quarter: The Sergeant of the Quarter is presented to those sergeants who have performed at the highest level of expectations throughout a particular quarter. One (1) Sergeant of the quarter who is assigned to the Bureau of Patrol will be selected by consensus of the District Commanders. One (1) Sergeant of the quarter who is assigned to the Community Relations Division or the Criminal Investigations Division will be selected by consensus of the Community Relations Division and Criminal Investigations Division Commanders.

The Patrol Officer of the Month/Quarter ribbon is black, blue, teal, and green in color with a centered white stripe.

 **L. Patrol Platoon of the Year Award**

The Patrol Platoon of The Year Award is awarded to the Bureau of Patrol platoon which exhibits exceptionally meritorious performance and outstanding delivery of police service to the community for the preceding year. The selected platoon must display superior performance of patrol delegated tasks as to set it apart and above other department Patrol Platoons with similar duties and responsibilities. Examples of actions meeting criteria for the award include but are not limited to: overall platoon productivity, crime reduction strategies implemented, community policing projects, critical incidents handled by the platoon, and/or actions supporting the department's stated goals and objectives. Only patrol officers assigned to Platoons 1, 2, 3 and 4 are eligible to receive this award.

On an annual basis, the Northern District, Eastern District, Southern District, and Western District Commanders will each select one patrol platoon from their district to be nominated for the award. Nominees for the award must be recognized by their chain of command with well-documented performance achievements. One patrol platoon will be selected by the Commendation Board to receive this award. Each person who was a member of the platoon selected will be named in the certificate and a letter of commendation is placed in each member's personnel file.

The Patrol Platoon of the Year Award ribbon is light blue with dark blue, yellow and a red stripe.

 **M. Allied Agency & Citizen Group Recognition Ribbon**

The Allied Agency & Citizen Group Recognition ribbon is authorized for any member who has received an award from an allied agency or has been named "officer of the year" from a citizen group.

The Allied Agency & Citizen Group Recognition ribbon is grey and blue.

 **N. September 11 Service Ribbon**

The September 11 Service Ribbon is issued to commemorate the anniversary of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the United States. The ribbon serves as a reminder of the tragic events and recognizes the outstanding work effort put forth by Department members, both in New York City and in Anne Arundel County. The ribbon is authorized for any uniformed member of the department, sworn or civilian, who was a member of the department on September 11th, 2001.

Non-sworn employees in a non-uniform assignment were presented with a Department Certificate in lieu of the ribbon.

The September 11 Service Ribbon has seven equal sized red, white and blue stripes.

 **O. Baltimore City “State of Emergency” Ribbon**

The Baltimore City “State of Emergency” Ribbon is authorized for any sworn uniformed member who was employed by the department during the Baltimore City “State of Emergency” in April of 2015. Uniformed members who were deployed to Baltimore City on 4/25/15, 4/27/15 or 4/28/15 are authorized to wear an “oak cluster” in the middle of the ribbon.

The Baltimore City “State of Emergency” ribbon is light blue with gold and dark blue stripes.

 **P. Capital Gazette Ribbon**

The Capital Gazette Ribbon is issued to commemorate the tragic shootings and subsequent response by the Anne Arundel County Police Department, that occurred at the Capital Gazette newspaper offices located at 888 Bestgate Road, Annapolis, on 6/28/18. The ribbon is authorized for any uniformed member, sworn or civilian, who was employed by the department on 6/28/18. All sworn and civilian members who responded to the scene of the shooting and all communications personnel who worked during the incident are authorized to wear the gold numbers 888 on the ribbon.

The Capital Gazette ribbon is gray with a light blue line.

 **Q. Police Unity Tour Ribbon**

The Police Unity Tour Ribbon is issued to recognize those who have participated in the Police Unity Tour. The Police Unity Tour is an annual multi-day bicycle ride that brings together law enforcement officers and their supporters from across the United States. Its primary mission is to raise public awareness about the dangers and sacrifices inherent in police work, specifically honoring those officers who have died in the line of duty. A crucial secondary goal is to generate financial support for the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial and Museum in Washington, D.C., which serves as a permanent tribute to fallen officers. Through their efforts, participants aim to ensure that the ultimate sacrifice made by these brave men and women is never forgotten.

The Police Unity Tour Ribbon is authorized for any uniformed member of the department who has participated in the Police Unity Tour as a rider or as support personnel.

The Police Unity Tour ribbon is half blue and half black.

 **R. Special Events Ribbon**

The Special Events Ribbon is authorized for any uniformed member of the department, sworn or civilian, who participated in an event that the Chief of Police determines to be a significant or historical event.

The following Special Events have been recognized as significant or historical:

1. 2007 Annapolis Peace Conference
2. 2009 Presidential Inauguration
3. 2013 Presidential Inauguration
4. 2017 Presidential Inauguration
5. 2020 Officer Shooting Incident - February 5th and 6th
6. 2021 Presidential Inauguration
7. 2025 Counting and Certification of Electoral College Votes - January 6th

The Special Events ribbon is light blue with dark blue, white, and gold stripes.

 **S. “The Shift” Ribbon**

The “The Shift” Ribbon is issued to recognize the historic transition of the Department’s operational scheduling and to honor the dedicated service of personnel who maintained Department operations under the “6 and 3” (six days on, three days off) rotation. The ribbon serves as a symbol of the endurance and commitment required of members who served during this era of the Department’s history.

The ribbon is authorized for any current employee of the Department who has worked the “6 and 3” schedule at any point in the Department’s history.

For those members who were actively employed and worked the final watch (2300-0730 hours) of the “6 and 3” schedule, known as “The Shift”, a star is authorized to be worn centered on the ribbon.

“The Shift” ribbon consists of white, light blue, and yellow stripes with a dark blue center.

 **T. Special Olympics Involvement Ribbon**

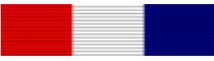
The Special Olympics Involvement ribbon is authorized for any member of the department who has officially participated in a Special Olympics event as a certified law enforcement representative. Qualifying events include, but are not limited to: the MSP Polar Bear Plunge, the annual Law Enforcement Torch Run, participation as an official at any Summer or Winter Special Olympics Games and/or participation in a departmentally sanctioned event.

The Special Olympics Involvement ribbon is light blue and orange.

 **U. Physical Fitness Ribbon**

The Physical Fitness Ribbon is authorized for any uniformed member of the department, sworn or civilian, who participates in the annual physical fitness assessment and achieves a level three or higher. (See Index Code 719.)

The Physical Fitness ribbon is red with blue and yellow stripes.

 **V. The Freedom Award**

The Freedom Award ribbon is authorized for any member of the department who is actively serving or has served in any military branch. A small star is awarded for officers who have served in a designated combat zone.

The Freedom Award ribbon is equal lines of red, white, and blue stripes.

W. Department Letter of Commendation

A letter of commendation may be directed to a member for proficient performance of duty in circumstances which do not merit the aforementioned awards but where some form of recognition for distinguished service is warranted.

X. Awarding of Certificate

In addition to the awarding of ribbons, a certificate is also given to all award recipients, with the exception of the National Defense Ribbon and the Commanders Award for Public Service.

Y. Other Jurisdictions’ Awards

Whenever an officer is recognized with an award from another jurisdiction, approval to wear the award must be sought from the Chief of Police. The Chief’s approval (or denial) may include an alternate, similar or equivalent Anne Arundel County award. Such awards are not subject to the Commendation Board.

IV. CITIZEN RECOGNITION POLICY

The consistent, effective investigation, prosecution, and reduction of crime cannot be accomplished by the police without the support and cooperation of the citizens. Each citizen must recognize his or her obligation to the community and the shared responsibility for its welfare. The department seeks to further the acceptance of these duties through recognition of those citizens whose actions have contributed to the accomplishments of the department’s mission or the safety of the community.

The award is known as the “Citizen Award for Outstanding Service to the Community”. The certificate consists of a document properly inscribed stating the situation, type of assistance, and the result, and is presented by the Chief of Police.

V. WEARING OF COMMENDATIONS

1. Commendation ribbons are worn centered, 1/4 inch below the nameplate and on the pocket flap. Up to 12 ribbons (3 per row, 4 rows maximum) may be worn on class A and class B uniforms. The ribbon(s) will be framed by a silver or gold metal frame, depending on the rank of the officer. Military style ribbon bars are authorized for use.

Members who receive more than one commendation in the same category receive a small star (silver or gold as appropriate) for each additional commendation in that category, to be placed on the ribbon, up to a maximum of 4 stars (5 total awards). Civilian employees wearing uniforms are permitted to display ribbons on their uniform as previously stated.

- Ribbons will be worn in order of precedence from the wearer’s left to right, with the highest in precedence on top and closest to the heart. If more than one row of ribbons is worn, the lower rows will consist of three ribbons and the next highest row will be centered above it. The following tables show the order of precedence for ribbons.

Ribbons Order of Precedence

1	Department Medal of Honor
2	Department Silver Star Award
3	Department Commendation Award
4	Purple Heart Award
5	Chief’s Award for Job Excellence
6	Department Unit/Section Citation
7	Community Service Award
8	Youth Service Award
9	Police Officer/Employee of the Year Award
10	Police Officer of the Month and Officer/Sergeant of the Quarter Award
11	Patrol Platoon of the Year Award
12	Allied Agency & Citizen Group Recognition
13	September 11 Service Ribbon
14	Baltimore City “State of Emergency” Ribbon
15	Capital Gazette Ribbon
16	Police Unity Tour Ribbon
17	Special Events Ribbon
18	<i>“The Shift” Ribbon</i>
19	Special Olympics Involvement Ribbon
20	Physical Fitness Ribbon
21	The Freedom Award
22	Awards from other jurisdictions

Display By Precedence (Example)

 Commendation Award	 Silver Star Award	 Medal of Honor
 Unit Citation	 Chief’s Award	 Purple Heart Award
 9-11 Ribbon	 Patrol Officer of the Month – Ofc./Sgt. of the Quarter	 Community Service Award
 Freedom Award	 Physical Fitness	 Special Events

VI. NOMINATING PROCEDURES FOR COMMENDATIONS/AWARDS

All members are encouraged to recognize outstanding performance of sworn personnel, civilian personnel and citizens. Any member who has knowledge of a commendable action deserving of recognition by one of the aforementioned awards, may submit a nomination to the Board chairperson.

- Nominations should be submitted to the chairperson of the Commendation Board using PD form 301, “Report-Commendation Award”. Nominations may be submitted as an inter-office correspondence using PD 301 as a coversheet and guide, but the inter-office should be no longer than two pages in length. An electronic copy of the nomination form and associated paperwork will also be forwarded to the Commendation Board chairperson through department email.
- The Commendation Board chairperson will retain all submissions received for consideration. The chairperson will convene the Commendation Board as needed. All nominations for activities or actions occurring in the calendar year must be submitted by February 21st of the following calendar year.
- At the conclusion of the Commendation Board review of a submitted nomination, a recommendation will be forwarded to the Chief of Police using PD form 301A, “Action of Commendation Board”, by the Board

chairperson. The appropriate PD form 301, "Report-Commendation Award", will be forwarded along with "Action of Commendation Board" form.

4. The Chief of Police will make a final ruling, which will be noted on the appropriate PD form 301A, "Action of Commendation Board". The Chief of Police will forward to the Media Relations Office those nominations for which a final disposition has been made. The Media Relations Office will maintain a permanent file of the nominations approved by the Chief of Police. The Media Relations Office will coordinate with the Board chairperson to notify the affected personnel, and/or the nominator, in writing of the results of the nomination and the procedure to obtain their ribbon if appropriate. The Media Relations Office will forward a copy of the correspondence for the recipients of an award to both the Property Management Unit, which is responsible for distribution of the appropriate ribbons within seven workdays, and the Police Personnel Section for inclusion in the affected employee's personnel file.
5. The Media Relations Office is responsible for planning and making all the necessary arrangements for the Annual Awards Banquet, to be held in the 2nd quarter of each year.

VII. PROPONENT UNIT: Media Relations Office.

VIII. CANCELLATION: This directive cancels Index Code 301, dated *09-04-25*.