Awards and Recognition

Cross Reference:...... 3.09, 3.15

I. Definitions

A. Medal of Valor (Gold Ribbon)

The Medal of Valor is the most distinguished award presented at the discretion of the Chief of Police to any active police officer or reserve officer for an act of outstanding valor. The nominee must have demonstrated, in great degree, the qualities of selflessness, personal courage, and devotion to duty. Factors for consideration of the nominee for this award are:

1. The situation was extremely hazardous; the nominee was able to evaluate the situation, was aware of the hazards, and took action.
2. An incontestable risk of death or serious physical injury existed when the nominee acted.
3. The act involved the preservation or attempted preservation of human life.
4. The nominee’s actions were consistent with good judgment and Division training and policy.
5. The failure to perform the act would not reflect negatively on the officer or the Division.
6. The objective was of sufficient importance to justify the risk.

B. Silver Cross (Red Ribbon)

The Silver Cross is presented at the discretion of the Chief of Police to any active officer or reserve officer who demonstrated an act of courage. Factors for consideration of the nominee for this award are:

1. The situation was dangerous; the nominee was able to evaluate the situation and take action.
2. The officer acted in an exemplary manner well above the duties normally expected of an officer and under a substantial risk of serious personal harm.
3. The act may have involved the preservation or attempted preservation of human life.
4. The nominee’s actions were consistent with good judgment and Division training and policy.
5. Failure to perform the act would not reflect negatively on the officer or the Division.
6. The objective was of sufficient importance to justify the risk.
C. Badge of Honor Medal

The Badge of Honor is awarded posthumously by the Chief of Police to any active sworn officer who is killed or died while in the act of performing his or her duties and under honorable circumstances.

D. Purple Heart (Purple Ribbon)

The commendation awarded to any active Division personnel or reserve officer who:

1. Sustained an injury while in the performance of duty, which would constitute serious physical harm as defined by the Ohio Revised Code, and was the result of an intentional criminal assault such as a shooting, stabbing, or bludgeoning.
2. While in the performance of duty, was the victim of an intentional criminal assault such as a shooting, stabbing, or bludgeoning, but due to the use of Division-issued protective equipment, did not sustain injuries that would constitute serious physical harm.

E. Distinguished Service Medal (Blue & Gray Ribbon)

The commendation awarded to an active police officer or reserve officer who performed an act in the line of duty at a risk of personal harm to him or herself. The act must have been performed under complicated or hazardous conditions, during which the officer used excellent judgment in accomplishing a specific police mission.

F. Medal of Merit (White Ribbon)

The commendation awarded to active Division personnel and reserve officers who:

1. Demonstrated a high degree of personal initiative.
2. Performed substantially above normal requirements in an exemplary manner.
3. Contributed significantly to the achievement of law enforcement goals.
4. Has received five Special Commendation Awards (automatic consideration).
5. Performed an act which preserved or attempted to preserve a human life with a significant risk of personal harm.

G. Blue Star (Blue Ribbon)

The commendation awarded to active Division personnel and reserve officers who:

1. While in the performance of duty sustained an injury which constituted serious physical harm as defined by the Ohio Revised Code, but did not meet the standard set forth for the Purple Heart Award.
2. Died as a result of natural causes or a traffic crash and under honorable conditions.
H. Special Commendation (Blue & Gold Ribbon)
The commendation awarded to Division personnel who distinguish themselves by:
1. Improving an administrative or tactical procedure within the Division.
2. Fostering a successful community affairs program.
3. Performing a valuable police service that demonstrated special faithfulness or perseverance.
4. Effecting an arrest for a second-degree felony or higher without prior information from an outside source. This does not include subsequent charges filed due to evidence found during an inventory search or searches subsequent to an arrest.
5. Performing an act which preserves or attempts to preserve a human life without risk of personal harm.
   Note: Law enforcement personnel from foreign jurisdictions shall be considered for the Special Commendation when their performance directly contributed to the effective operation of the Columbus Division of Police.

I. Citizen Commendation
The commendation awarded to citizens who distinguish themselves by the performance of a heroic act involving great personal hazard.

J. Meritorious Public Service
The commendation awarded to citizens for contributing to the success of a police program in the area of traffic safety, crime prevention, or community relations.

K. Latent Evidence Award (Black & Gold Ribbon)
The commendation awarded to sworn patrol zone personnel who distinguish themselves by:
1. Securing, collecting, and submitting latent evidence that results in the identification and either the apprehension of or the filing of charges on the person(s) responsible for a felony offense of burglary or auto theft.
2. Securing, collecting, and submitting over 400 latent prints of evidentiary value during the calendar year.

L. Field Training Officer (FTO) Award (Red, White & Blue Ribbon)
The commendation awarded to sworn Division personnel who have served as an FTO for probationary Patrol officers.
1. First Award (Ribbon) - The completion of four probationary officer training phases.
2. Second and subsequent awards (Star for ribbon) - Each additional four probationary Patrol officer training phases completed.
M. Safe Driving Award (Dark Green Ribbon)
The commendation awarded to Division personnel who spend the majority of their duty hours driving a marked vehicle, and while on duty have not had an at-fault accident within the specified time frame.
1. First award (Certificate and ribbon) - Five consecutive years of driving without an at-fault accident after graduating from the training academy.
2. Second or subsequent award (Certificate and ribbon) - Five consecutive years of safe driving without an at-fault accident after receiving a previous award.

N. Safe Flying Award (Navy Blue & White Ribbon)
The commendation awarded to Helicopter Unit personnel who have attained the required number of error-free flight hours as a commercial pilot for the Division as outlined in the Helicopter Unit's Standard Operating Procedures manual and described below:
1. First award (Certificate and ribbon) - 2000 flight hours as a commercial pilot for the Division without any incidents due to pilot error, to include "hot starts", as determined by the Aviation Safety Board.
2. Second award (Certificate and star for ribbon) - 3500 flight hours of safe flying by the addition of 1500 flight hours without any incidents of pilot error from the end date of the first award.
3. Third or subsequent award (Certificate and star for ribbon) - 3500 flight hours without any incidents of pilot error after receiving a previous award.

O. Physical Fitness Award (Green & White Ribbon)
The commendation awarded to sworn personnel who complete the physical fitness test and achieve either a Level II or III rating as outlined in the appropriate collective bargaining agreement.

P. Senior Patrol Officer - Bill Smith Memorial Award
The police officer with the most seniority working a uniformed precinct assignment in Patrol shall be awarded badge #1 and have his or her name engraved on the plaque displayed in Police Headquarters. The officer shall meet the following criteria:
1. Has spent a minimum of 15 years in a uniformed patrol zone assignment.
2. Has served in a patrol zone assignment for the five consecutive years immediately prior to becoming eligible for the award.
3. Is working in a regular duty status or marked on non-extended injury leave.
4. Has no sustained departmental charges in the past four years.
5. Has two or fewer written reprimands (non-driving related) in the previous two years.
6. Is not currently under investigation where discipline could result in departmental charges or a written reprimand.
II. Policy Statements

A. An Award Recommendation, form A-15, may be submitted for an award listed in Section I, A through K (excluding C) by a Division employee who has firsthand knowledge of, but was not directly involved in the action(s) that resulted in the nomination.

B. An award nomination shall not be considered more than 90 days after the date the incident occurred, with the following exceptions:

1. The incident from which the nomination originated involves a criminal or administrative investigation that requires more than 90 days to complete, and
2. A letter requesting a time extension is submitted by the nominator; or
3. The nominator includes an explanation in the Award Recommendation form narrative detailing the reason(s) for the submission delay.

C. The nominator shall ensure that there is sufficient information to justify the requested award, and should have the nominee(s) review the Award Recommendation form for thoroughness and accuracy prior to submission.

D. The nominator shall include all pertinent information in the narrative of the Award Recommendation form regarding the incident to include:

1. Specific action(s) of each nominated individual
2. Incident number or electronic report number, if applicable
3. Suspect(s) and victim(s) name(s)
4. Court case number(s) and current status
5. Fire/Medic/EMS report, if applicable
6. Letters and supporting documents from other agencies or sources, if applicable
7. For the Purple Heart and Blue Star awards, indicate that the employee sustained serious physical harm as defined by the ORC, if applicable

Note: Do not attach copies or include any electronic incident reports, criminal complaints, Arrest Information forms, medical documentation forms, or personal medical information with the Award Recommendation form.

E. The award nominator or nominee may appeal the decision of the Awards Committee, if they feel it is not appropriate, by forwarding a letter to the Chief of Police within fourteen days of receipt of notification from the Awards Committee Coordinator advising of the committee’s vote.

F. The award nominator or nominee may appeal the decision of the Awards Committee, if new facts or information has been discovered that was not available at the time of the original submission, by forwarding the information to the Awards Committee Chairperson within fourteen days of receipt of notification for reconsideration at the next Awards Committee meeting.

G. No Division personnel or reserve officer shall be considered for a Division medal if his or her actions were negligent, improper, or a violation of Division Directives, unless otherwise approved by the Chief of Police.
H. Recipients of the Medal of Valor, Silver Cross, Purple Heart, Distinguished Service Medal, Medal of Merit, and Blue Star shall be invited to the annual recognition dinner.

I. For awards given posthumously, two invitations shall be extended to the immediate family of the Division employee to attend the annual recognition dinner.

J. Division supervisors shall evaluate the records of their personnel each January to determine their eligibility for the Safe Driving Award, and shall submit nominations to the Awards Committee Coordinator on the Safe Driving Awards Form, A-14, as applicable. All eligible personnel from the same unit should be listed on one form.

K. Officers involved in an at-fault accident after receiving a Safe Driving Award must drive five consecutive years without an at-fault accident to be eligible for another award. The eligibility time period starts on the date the accident occurred.

L. Pilots involved in an incident due to pilot error after receiving a Safe Flying Award must attain 3500 error-free flight hours to be eligible for the next award. The flight hours time period starts on the date the incident occurred. The officer’s deputy chief shall give final approval for the award.

M. Sworn personnel may wear the appropriate Physical Fitness ribbon during the year(s) they are eligible. Sworn personnel failing to take the test or attain the same fitness level during a given year shall contact the Awards Committee Coordinator to return or exchange the ribbon.

N. The Senior Officer Award recipient shall forfeit badge #1 and be ineligible for future reconsideration if any of the following occur:
   1. Transfers to a non-Patrol assignment
   2. Sustained departmental charges
   3. Retirement from the Division of Police
   4. Unable to perform in a regular-duty status for more than six months.

III. Procedures

A. Nominating Personnel

1. Complete an Award Recommendation form or Safe Driving Awards Form in accordance with the above policies and forward it in the following manner:
   a. For awards listed in Section I, A through K (excluding C), send the form through the chain of command to the Police Awards Committee Chairperson.
   b. For Safe Driving awards, send the form directly to the Awards Committee Coordinator.
   c. For the Safe Flying award, forward the form through the chain of command to the deputy chief for approval and presentation.
B. Supervisor
   1. Verify eligibility
      a. Safe Driving Award
         (1) Check personnel database for hire date and assignment history.
         (2) Check the Safe Driving Award Card Info spreadsheet on the Intranet
             maintained by the Awards Committee Coordinator for previous Safe
             Driving awards.
         (3) Check Fleet Safety Records on the Division’s Intranet for sworn
             employees.
         (4) Review driving and accident records for non-sworn employees.
      b. Safe Flying Award
         Review the flying records/logs of the personnel under your immediate
         command.
   
C. FTO Coordinator
   1. Maintain and update the master list of FTOs and the probationary officers
      they have coached.
   2. Forward a list of FTOs who have attained an award to the Awards
      Coordinator after the completion of the final coaching phase of the current
      probationary officers.

D. Latent Unit Supervisor
   Monitor and track weekly and monthly statistic reports of submitted latent
   prints by Patrol officers, and forward a report to the Awards Committee
   Coordinator by March of each year.

E. Police Awards Committee Members
   1. Review nominations.
   2. Make an award determination for each individual nominated.

F. Awards Committee Coordinator
   1. Awards listed in Section I, A through K (excluding C)
      a. Record Awards Committee votes and forward nominations for the Medal
         of Valor and Silver Cross to the Police Awards Committee Chairperson.
      b. Notify nominator of the Awards Committee’s vote via a copy of the
         routing sheet.
      c. Notify award nominee of the Awards Committee’s decision via a letter,
         certificate, or copy of the routing sheet.
      d. Compose narratives for the certificates.
      e. Schedule and make all necessary preparations for an awards ceremony.
      f. Assist with annual Recognition Dinner.
   2. Physical Fitness Award
      Receive award recipient information from the contracted testing facility.
3. All Awards
   a. Record the award information for each employee.
   b. Assemble ribbon bars and distribute as appropriate.
   c. Forward original Award Recommendation form and a copy of the issued certificate to the Personnel Unit for inclusion in the employee’s Master Personnel File.
   d. Distribute original certificates as appropriate.

G. Police Awards Committee Chairperson
   1. Present nominations for the Medal of Valor and Silver Cross to the Chief of Police.
   2. Review written appeals on behalf of the Awards Committee with the Chief of Police.
   3. Ensure all nominees are notified of the Awards Committee’s or Chief’s decision.

H. Chief of Police
   1. Award Badge of Honor Medal.
   2. Approve or disapprove nominations for the Medal of Valor and Silver Cross.
   3. Review appeals and consult with the Police Awards Committee Chairperson regarding relevancy of new information.
   4. Forward nominations and appeal decisions to the Awards Committee Coordinator for notification purposes.