

COLCHESTER POLICE DEPARTMENT

		SUBJECT: Performance Recognition Awards	
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REFERENCE:			
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POLICY: Recognition of personal excellence and distinguished service is an important aspect of the Colchester Police Department's activities. Presenting departmental awards for meritorious service provides that recognition, thereby enhancing departmental morale, reinforcing the department's commitment to the maintenance of a high standard of performance by its members, and motivating personnel to perform their duties at the highest possible level. Therefore, it is the policy of this department to recognize and reward meritorious service through an awards program to be administered under the procedures set forth herein.

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I. Awards Board

- A. The Chief of Police shall appoint an Awards Board to receive and evaluate recommendations for awards. This Board shall determine whether an award should be presented and, if so, which award would be appropriate. The Board shall consist of one member each representing the following:
 - Administration
 - Supervisors (Sergeant)
 - Colchester Police Officers Association (Selected by membership)
 - Civilian Staff
 - Member of the Colchester Community (Civilian)
- B. Each Board member shall serve a two-year term. At the discretion of the Chief of Police, members' terms may overlap so that only a portion of the Board is appointed each year. Members of the Board may, at the discretion of the Chief of Police, be appointed for a second term, but no Board member shall serve

more than two terms consecutively. The member of the Board who is senior in rank shall serve as chair of the Board.

- C. If a member of the Awards Board is under consideration for receipt of any award, that member shall be excused from the Board for the period when this award is under consideration. The Chief of Police may appoint an ad hoc member to the Board of appropriate rank to serve on the Board in place of the officer being considered for the period indicated.
- D. The Awards Board should consider the following factors when deciding on the issuance of an award:
 - The recipient used proper judgment and discretion and did not precipitate the necessity for the act.
 - The act was not careless or foolhardy.
 - The act was in keeping with current policies and reflect favorably on the employee and the department.
 - The recipient made a significant and lasting contribution to the department, the community and/or the law enforcement profession.

II. Awards

A. Medal of Honor

Awarded to departmental members for conspicuous gallantry while acting in the line of duty. Presented to officers for acts of exceptional bravery performed at very high risk to their own lives with full awareness of the danger involved. This award will be presented in the form of a medal, a ribbon bar, and a certificate.

B. Medal of Valor

Awarded to departmental members who distinguish themselves in the line of duty by acts of personal bravery not falling within the guidelines for the Medal of Honor. This award will be presented in the form of a medal, a ribbon bar, and a certificate.

C. Life-Saving Award

To be conferred upon any member of the department whose actions directly contribute to saving or significantly prolonging human life. This award will be presented to officers in the form of a ribbon bar and certificate. A civilian employee or community member can be recognized for life saving efforts that meet the same criteria. The award will be presented in the form of a certificate.

D. Purple Heart Award

The Purple Heart may be awarded to an individual who is injured while serving in an official capacity with this department. The injury sustained must have been a result of a serious or life threatening situation or permanent injury received as a result of the action and not

has been caused by carelessness on the part of the individual. This award will be presented in the form of a ribbon bar and certificate.

E. Distinguished Service Award

Awarded to department members for exceptional accomplishments. This individual has distinguished themselves while performing highly creditable or unusual actions. Factors for consideration:

- The recipient made a significant and major contribution to the development of programs, policies or procedures which had a substantial and positive impact to the department, community, or profession.
- The recipient successfully conducted a long-term investigation or solved a neighborhood problem that had a tremendous impact on the community.
- The recipient took an extraordinary action while assisting the community.

This award is presented in the form of a ribbon bar and certificate.

F. Meritorious Service Award

Awarded to any member of the department for outstanding job accomplishment that has contributed to a more effective and efficient police department. This may involve improved administration, improved operations, substantial cost savings, or other benefits to the department that have materially facilitated the effective performance of the department's mission. This award is presented in the form of a ribbon bar and a certificate.

G. Unit Citation Award

Awarded to a group of employees that distinguished themselves and brings credit to the department, and/or the profession by highly credible act(s) in the performance of law enforcement or community service. This award is presented in the form of a ribbon bar and certificate.

H. Certificate of Commendation

Presented in recognition of a high degree of competence and professionalism in the performance of departmental duties. This includes exemplary conduct during a field incident or operation, outstanding administrative work, the effective handling of a criminal investigation, the organization of a new and beneficial departmental program, designing and conducting a course of training, and commendable participation in any other activity that improves the department's functioning or brings credit upon the department in any way. It may also be presented to any employee who has demonstrated long-term excellence in service to the agency. This award is presented in the form of a certificate.

- I. Citizen Commendation
This award may be presented to any person who is not a member of the department but who has materially aided the department or its officers in some way. This includes assistance in the solution of crime or the apprehension of criminals, aiding an officer in the field in a critical situation, and cooperation with or assistance to the department as a whole in any aspect of the department's administration or operations.

III. Recommendations

- A. Who May Make Recommendations
Any departmental member may recommend another departmental member for any award. More than one person may make recommendations jointly.
- B. Form of Recommendations
Award recommendations shall be neatly prepared and shall set forth in detail the circumstances upon which the award is recommended. The recommendation must identify the person or persons making the recommendation and be signed by that person or those persons.
- C. Supporting Documentation
The recommendation form may be accompanied by such supporting documentation as is deemed desirable by the person or persons initiating the recommendation. This documentation may include such items as witness statements, photographs, pertinent departmental incident reports, medical reports, reports from other law enforcement agencies, statements from civilians familiar with the incident, newspaper articles, and any other evidence that will assist the Awards Board in determining the merits of the recommendation.
- D. Forwarding of Recommendation
The recommendation shall be forwarded to the Awards Board in the manner and through the channels established by the Board.
- E. Nomination of Private Citizens for Awards
Any member of the department who is given significant assistance by a citizen, or any member of the department who is aware that such assistance has been given to another employee, may nominate that citizen for a Citizen Commendation. Such nominations shall be prepared and forwarded in the manner prescribed for recommendations of departmental personnel.
- F. Letters from Citizens Commending a Departmental Employee
Letters from citizens commending a departmental employee shall be forwarded to the employee's unit commander for review. If the commander concludes that an award to the employee may be justified,

he or she shall prepare and forward to the Awards Board a recommendation for award in accordance with the procedures set forth in this policy.

IV. Determination of Awards

- A. All recommendations for departmental awards are to be kept on file pending the next meeting of the Awards Board. The Awards Board shall meet quarterly or at such other intervals as are directed by the Board Chair. Special meetings may be held at the discretion of the Board Chair to consider recommendations requiring the Board's immediate attention.
- B. Where the recommendation is for an award to be presented posthumously, or for an award to a departmental member who has been seriously injured in the incident that is the subject of the recommendation, the Board shall convene to consider the award as soon as possible following receipt of the recommendation.
- C. The Awards Board shall conduct a fact finding process to examine the circumstances of the recommendation and collect all of the facts pertinent to the case. This process may include the interview of witnesses, the examination of supporting documents submitted with the recommendation, the examination of any other reports prepared in connection with the incident, and, if necessary, field investigation to determine the accuracy of the testimony and documentation submitted.
- D. Upon completion of the fact-finding process, the Board shall consider the case in closed session and vote upon the recommendation. A majority of the votes of the Board members present and voting shall be sufficient to determine the Board's recommendation.
- E. The Board may make any one of the following findings:
 - 1. That the case meets the standards for the award that is the subject of the recommendation, and that the award is therefore approved, or
 - 2. That the circumstances justify recognition, but that it has been determined that the presentation should be for an award other than that specified in the initial recommendation, or
 - 3. That the facts as currently known do not justify an award at this time.
- F. Following the Board's deliberations, a written report shall be forwarded to the Chief of Police setting forth the Board's findings. Upon receipt of the Board's report, the Chief of Police may approve, disapprove, or

modify the Board's findings. The Chief of Police will have final determination of issuance of awards or commendations.

- G. Only one award shall be made to an individual for any one act, achievement, or period of meritorious service. However, there is no limit to the number of medals, certificates, or letters of recognition that may be awarded to an individual for separate acts.
- H. The Awards Board shall maintain an Awards Case File. This file shall contain copies of each report of the Board's deliberations upon each recommendation received. This includes all recommendations for awards to departmental members, together with copies of any supporting documents submitted with the recommendations. The Awards Case File shall be maintained alphabetically by employees' names, and shall be open for inspection to any member of the department. Recommendations for commendation of civilians for assistance to the department shall be maintained in a similar manner.
- I. Prior to January 1 of each year, the Board shall prepare and forward to the Chief of Police an annual report stating the number of award recommendations received during the prior year, the total number of awards presented during that year, and the number of each type of award presented. The Board shall make recommendations for changes or additions to this policy.
- J. The Awards Board shall recommend to the Chief of Police the exact style and make up of each award, ribbon, and certificate and prepare a recommendation on how they are to be worn. The Chief of Police will approve or modify this recommendation.

V. Notification of Award

- A. Personnel for whom departmental awards have been approved shall be notified immediately of the award through the chain of command. In exceptional cases, the notifications may be made directly by the Chief of Police or his/her designee.
- B. Notices of all departmental awards shall be issued as a Special Orders and shall be made a matter of record in the employee's personnel file. A photocopy of the certificate of award shall be included in the file. All awards shall be considered in connection with future personnel decisions, such as promotion or assignment to a particular duty or location.
- C. Where appropriate, press releases regarding departmental awards should be made available to local media representatives.

- D. A copy of citizen's letter of commendation shall be forwarded to the employee, another copy shall be placed in the employee's personnel file, and further copies shall be posted on departmental bulletin boards or otherwise disseminated within the department. Citizens who have received departmental commendations for assistance to the department should be notified in a similar manner.

VI. Presentations of Awards

- A. Presentation of all departmental awards shall be made at a formal ceremony deemed appropriate by the Chief of Police upon recommendation of the Awards Board. During awards ceremonies, presentations of awards shall be made, whenever possible, by the Chief of Police.
- B. All personnel not otherwise engaged in duty assignments shall be encouraged to attend the presentation. The recipient's supervisors should be present, and the ceremony should be scheduled to make this possible. All personnel attending such ceremonies should be properly attired as directed by the Chief of Police.
- C. Members of the recipient's family shall be invited to attend the ceremony and, upon arrival, should be escorted to a position that provides a full view of the proceedings.
- D. Posthumous awards shall be received by the next of kin. "Next of kin" normally is construed to mean one of the following:
 - 1. Widow or widower or life partner.
 - 2. Eldest son or daughter
 - 3. Parent
 - 4. Eldest brother or sisterThis order of preference may be modified as circumstances dictate in individual cases.
- E. Posthumous awards may be presented at the memorial or funeral service for that individual or at such other time as is deemed appropriate by the next of kin.
- F. Letters of recognition not presented at a formal ceremony shall be placed in the employee's personnel file and a copy posted on departmental bulletin boards or otherwise disseminated through the department.
- G. Commendations to civilians may be presented at a formal ceremony at the discretion of the Chief of Police, but only with the prior approval of the citizen concerned.

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