

Commendations and Awards Committee

1015.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Special recognition may be in order whenever an employee performs his/her duties in an exemplary manner. This policy provides general guidelines for commending exceptional employee performance, including awarding commendations and medals. This policy also establishes the composition and responsibilities of the Awards Committee.

1015.2 AUTHORITY TO COMMEND

A written commendation may be made by any supervisor regarding any other employee of the Department, provided the reporting person is superior in rank or is the person-in-charge of the individual being commended. Additionally, investigating officers may commend uniformed officers for exceptional assistance in investigative functions, with approval from the investigator's supervisor. Any employee may recommend a commendation to the supervisor of the employee subject to commendation.

1015.3 COMMENDATION REPORT

The Commendation Report shall be used to document the commendation of the employee and shall contain the following:

- (a) Employee name, bureau, and assignment at the date and time of the commendation
- (b) A brief account of the commendable action shall be documented on the form with report numbers, as appropriate
- (c) Signature of the commending supervisor and chain of command, as appropriate

All commendations shall be submitted within one year of occurrence of the incident, action or performance. In cases pending final findings of the Shooting Review or Major Incident Review Board, commendations may be submitted beyond this one-year provision, but shall be submitted within one year of the respective board's final finding.

Completed reports shall be forwarded through the chain of command and maintained in accordance with department policy.

1015.3.1 ROUTING

The Commendation Report form shall be routed in the following manner, as applicable:

- (a) Immediate Supervisor
- (b) District or Division Commander
- (c) Bureau Commander
- (d) Chief of Police

1015.3.2 AWARDING

Medals and commendations will be awarded as follows:

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- All medals and Department Wide Commendations will be awarded by the Chief of Police at an appropriate ceremony.
- Bureau Commendations will be awarded by the Bureau Commander of the commended employee.
- Division Commendations will be awarded by the District or Division Commander.
- Minor Commendations will be awarded by the immediate supervisor.

1015.3.3 FILING

A copy of minor commendation reports shall be given to employees and the original kept in the employee's bureau file for use in the annual performance evaluation. In all other commendations, employees shall be given a copy of the commendation and the original report kept in the employee's personnel file.

1015.4 CLASSIFICATION OF COMMENDATIONS

A meritorious or commendable act by an employee of this department may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- (a) Medal of Valor - The Medal of Valor may be awarded to an employee who displays conspicuous bravery or heroism above and beyond the normal demands of police service in responding to criminal situations involving extreme danger to the employee.
- (b) Distinguished Service Medal - The Distinguished Service Medal may be awarded to an employee who distinguishes himself/herself through a display of bravery or heroism in circumstances which are above or beyond the normal demands of duty, but to a lesser degree than that required for the Medal of Valor.
- (c) Police Service Medal - Valor - This medal recognizes an employee whose actions are conspicuous in a situation fitting one or more of the following circumstances:
 1. For exceptional action(s) in rendering aid during a situation under circumstances which pose grave danger to the employee
 2. Where there is an exposure to hazardous criminal actions and severe injuries are sustained in the performance of one's duties
 3. Where an employee suffers great personal sacrifice or hardship as a result of an unusual incident
- (d) Police Service Medal Administrative - This medal recognizes extraordinary actions by an employee which significantly improve the quality of life for the community within the Department's Community Oriented Policing philosophy, or extraordinary actions by an employee not involving danger or physical hazards, but whose actions are above the level of a Department Wide or Bureau Commendation.
- (e) Purple Heart Medal - May be awarded for a sworn member incurring serious injury or death in the performance of law enforcement functions on or off duty. This award does not include injury in motor vehicle accidents unless special circumstances are determined by the Awards Committee.

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- (f) Life Saving Medal - May be awarded to any Santa Ana Police Department member or members acting as a team, in recognition of acts that contribute to the saving of a person's life.
- (g) Department Wide Commendation - Outstanding, exceptional work that goes beyond the normal course of duty. This direct action and contribution by the employee must enhance the image and operation of the Police Department.
- (h) Bureau Command Level Commendation - Meritorious police work.
- (i) Division Command or Area Command Level Commendation - Above average police work of a routine nature, such as positive log entries.
- (j) Minor Commendation - Ordinary police work of a routine nature but deserving of recognition.

1015.5 DISPLAY OF MEDALS

Officers receiving a commendatory medal are authorized to wear the accompanying award ribbon and should be encouraged to do so in accordance with the Department Uniform Policy.

- (a) The Medal of Valor shall be of yellow metal and measure 1-1/2 inches by 2-3/4 inches with the City of Santa Ana seal centered. The medal shall have a red, white, and blue neck ribbon attached. Accompanying the medal shall be a uniform award ribbon made of yellow metal and colored with French enamel to match the colors of the neck ribbon on the Medal of Valor. A yellow metal "V" shall be inlaid on the center color panel of the Uniform Award Ribbon. The Uniform Award Ribbon shall measure 3/8 inches by 1-1/2 inches.
- (b) The Distinguished Service Medal shall be of yellow metal and measure 1-1/2 inches in diameter with the City of Santa Ana seal centered. The medal shall have an attached blue ribbon with a yellow center. Accompanying the medal shall be a uniform award ribbon made of yellow metal and colored with French enamel to match the colors of the ribbon on the medal. The uniform award ribbon shall measure 3/8 by 1-1/2 inches.
- (c) The Police Service Medal of Valor shall be of yellow metal and measure 1-1/2 inches in diameter with the City of Santa Ana seal centered. The medal shall have a blue and yellow ribbon attached. Accompanying the medal shall be a uniform award ribbon made of yellow metal and colored with French enamel to match the colors of the ribbon on the Police Service Medal. The uniform award ribbon shall measure 3/8 by 1-1/2 inches. The uniform award ribbon shall have a "V" for valor inlaid on the blue portion of the award ribbon.
- (d) The Police Service Medal (Administrative) shall be of yellow metal and measure 1-1/2 inches in diameter with the City Seal centered. The medal shall have a blue and yellow ribbon attached, accompanying the medal shall be a uniform award ribbon made of yellow metal and colored with French enamel to match the colors of the ribbon on the police service medal. The uniform award ribbon shall measure 3/8" by 1-1/2".
- (e) The Purple Heart Medal shall be of yellow metal and measure 1-1/2 inches in diameter with the City of Santa Ana seal centered. The medal shall have a purple ribbon attached. Accompanying the medal shall be a uniform award ribbon made of yellow

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metal, colored with French enamel to match the color of the ribbon on the medal. The uniform award ribbon shall measure 3/8 by 1-1/2 inches.

- (f) The Life Saving Medal shall be of yellow metal and measure 1-1/2 inches in diameter with the City of Santa Ana seal centered. The medal shall have a red ribbon attached. Accompanying the medal shall be a uniform award ribbon made of yellow metal, colored with French enamel to match the color of the ribbon on the medal. The uniform award ribbon shall measure 3/8 by 1-1/2 inches. Officers who qualify for more than one medal will have a yellow metal star inlaid on the center panel of the highest uniform award ribbon presented.

1015.6 COMMENDATION FOR CITIZEN ASSISTANCE IN PUBLIC SAFETY EFFORTS

The Department may recognize citizens for providing assistance when their efforts result in apprehension of criminals, prevention of bodily injury to other persons, saving another person's life, or recovery of stolen property.

In such cases, the following procedures should be followed:

- (a) A member of this Department may recognize the efforts of the citizen and informally give recognition for his/her efforts.
- (b) If a member believes further recognition is warranted, a copy of any report in which the above circumstances are noted will be forwarded to the Public Information Officer.
- (c) The Public Information Officer will be responsible for assuring that the above criteria have been met and and prepare a letter of appreciation for review by the Chief of Police.
 - 1. This letter of appreciation shall not take the place of any existing commendation programs, but may supplement them.
- (d) Once approved by the Chief of Police, the letter of appreciation will be sent to the commended citizen.
 - 1. The commended citizen shall not be a person directly related to the crime victim (i.e., a relative, etc.).

1015.7 AWARDS COMMITTEE

The Chief of Police shall give final approval for the awarding of all Department Wide awards and medals. The purpose of the Awards Committee is to act as an advisory body to the Chief of Police in this capacity. Its members are charged with the responsibility of examining each award nomination above the Bureau Command Level Commendation. The committee will constructively critique each award nomination to ensure that it meets the criteria for the award and make a recommendation to the Chief of Police.

1015.7.1 AWARDS COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP AND SELECTION

The Awards Committee will be comprised of 7 voting members of the Department. The Chief of Police will appoint the Chairperson and media relations representative. All other members will be appointed by their respective Bureau Commanders.

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The members of the Awards Committee are:

- (a) The Chairperson
- (b) The Media Relations member
- (c) One sworn member from the Investigations Bureau
- (d) One sworn member from the Administration Bureau
- (e) One sworn member from the Field Operations Bureau
- (f) One at-large non-sworn member
- (g) One member from the Jail Bureau

In the event of an actual or anticipated vacancy on the committee, the Chairperson will request letters of interest. Upon receipt of a letter of interest, the applicant's immediate supervisor and Division Commander will make a recommendation to their Bureau Commander, who will make a decision as to the applicant's suitability. Prior to making this determination, the affected Bureau Commander will discuss his/her recommendations with the Chairperson.

The Bureau Commander's selection will be forwarded to the Senior Management Team for review. Awards Committee members are required to attend all committee meetings and fully participate in its activities. Additionally, members shall serve as long as they remain assigned in a position to act as a representative and may be removed by the Chief of Police, at the recommendation of the Chairperson.

1015.7.2 COMMITTEE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The chairperson will convene the committee upon the receipt of a commendation for Medal of Valor, Distinguished Service Medal, Police Service Medal, Purple Heart Medal, Life Saving Medal or Department Level Commendation. The employee who submitted the nomination may be directed to attend the Awards Committee meeting to clarify any necessary details of the commendation. At the conclusion of the review of the commendation, the Chairperson will report the Committee's findings and recommendations to the Chief of Police. These findings may include one of the following recommended classifications:

- (a) Medal of Valor
- (b) Distinguished Service Medal
- (c) Police Service Medal Valor
- (d) Police Service Medal Administrative
- (e) Purple Heart Medal
- (f) Lifesaving Medal
- (g) Department Wide Commendation

Any commendation not meeting the criteria for the above awards will be referred back to the Chief of Police or appropriate manager for disposition.