

**MARIN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
GENERAL ORDER**

CHAPTER 1 - ADMINISTRATION
GO-01-03
Page 1 of 5

DATE
12/15/07

DEPARTMENTAL AWARDS

POLICY

It is the policy of the Sheriff to recognize members, professional staff and private citizens for actions of heroism, meritorious service, and for actions above and beyond the call of duty for services rendered to law enforcement and the community.

DEFINITIONS

Medal of Valor

Medal of Valor is the Department's highest award, and may be awarded to members who, while serving in an official capacity, distinguish themselves by conspicuous bravery or heroism above and beyond the normal demands of law enforcement service.

Blue Star Medal

This medal shall be awarded to a member who incurs a serious injury while engaged in an official police duty involving the safety of persons and property.

Life Saving Medal

This Life Saving Medal shall be awarded to those members and professional staff who distinguish themselves by saving another human being from imminent death or serious bodily injury.

Medal of Merit

The Medal of Merit shall be awarded to those members who distinguish themselves by performing in stressful situations with exceptional tactics and/or judgment. The medal may be awarded to members who distinguish themselves by bravery or heroism above and beyond the normal demands of duty, but to a lesser degree than required for the Medal of Valor.

Medal of Commendation

The medal of Commendation shall be awarded to those members and professional staff who, in the best interests of the Department, and serving in an official capacity, distinguish themselves by performing exceptional service that required unusual thoroughness, conscientiousness, determination, and initiative. The exceptional service refers to the performance of duty that is clearly above that normally expected.

Certificate of Commendation

The Certificate of Commendation shall be awarded to members, professional staff and private citizens who exemplify an extraordinary quality of service. This award will be made at the discretion of the Sheriff, the awards committee or upon recommendation of the employee's division commander.

Certificate of Appreciation

The Certificate of Appreciation shall be awarded to members and professional staff and private citizens who exemplify quality service above and beyond expectations as recognized by a member, professional staff person or citizen. The certificates are awarded at the discretion of the Sheriff.

Letter of Commendation

A Letter of Commendation from the Sheriff may be awarded to private citizens, members, and professional staff who perform acts of services deserving of Departmental recognition

Letter of Appreciation

A Letter of Appreciation from the Sheriff may be awarded to private citizens, members, and professional staff for appropriate reasons

Unit Citation

The Unit Citation may be awarded to an entire Sheriff's Office work group / unit when the members of that work group / unit collectively perform acts or services deserving of departmental recognition. Recognition using the Unit Citation may include any level of Departmental Award up to and including the Medal of Commendation.

PROCEDURE

Duty to Report

It shall be the duty of every member and professional staff person to report and document all acts worthy of commendation. The documentation shall be forwarded to the affected bureau commander as soon as practical, not more than 20 days after the incident.

Nomination Procedure

Nomination for the award of medal, certificate, or letter to a member, professional staff person or private citizen shall be made by any member or professional staff whenever they have knowledge that an act or service has been performed that is deserving of such recognition. The nominating member shall complete the Marin County Sheriff's Office inter-departmental memo to the Bureau Commander. The Bureau commander shall review the memo for completeness and accuracy along with all appropriate supporting documentation including written reports. The Bureau Commander shall forward the documentation to the Undersheriff for review.

The memo shall contain the following information:

- All the people involved in the actions(s)
- The date, time and a complete description of the incident.
- Any reports or supporting documentation of the incident.

This material shall be submitted to the Bureau Commander within 20 days of the incident.

When a manager or supervisor learns of the actions, which would qualify an employee or member for a Departmental award the manager or supervisor shall nominate that person by submitting an inter-departmental memo to the employee's Bureau Commander.

Any member or professional staff person of the Department who believes they are entitled to recognition for an act done in performance of their duties or as a result of distinction to the

Department, and where no recommendation has been submitted for consideration of commendation, should submit the following to their bureau commander via the chain of command:

- A memo indicating the date, time and a complete description of the incident
- Any reports or supporting documentation of the incident

This material shall be submitted to the Undersheriff within 20 days of the incident.

The Undersheriff shall maintain a file on the Valor and Service Award Nominations and accompanying documentation. The Undersheriff shall arrange for a meeting of the Awards' Evaluation Committee at least twice each year (the first week in November and May), although more frequent meetings of the Committee may be arranged based on the number and/or type of nominations received.

The Undersheriff shall send a letter to the nominee advising him/her that a request for an award has been received for a review by the Awards Evaluation Committee. This letter should be sent out within 30 days of receipt of the nomination.

AWARDS EVALUATION COMMITTEE

Each year in August, or more frequently based on the nature of the circumstances, the Undersheriff will appoint the Awards Evaluation Committee. Any employee or member may indicate their desire to serve on this Committee to the Undersheriff. The Committee shall consist of seven members.

The Undersheriff shall be designated as Chairperson and serve as a facilitator only. Additionally, in case of a tie, the Undersheriff shall cast the tie-breaking vote. The Balance of the committee shall consist of:

1. One Field Services Sergeant
2. One Field Services Deputy Sheriff
3. One Detention Services Sergeant
4. One Detention Services Deputy Sheriff
5. One Communication Dispatcher or Communications Supervisor
6. One Professional Staff Member or Professional Staff Supervisor

The Awards Evaluation Committee shall review nominations twice a year (the first week in November and May) and shall have the responsibility to assign an award, commendation or letter classification to each nomination being considered, or in the alternative, determine that an award is not applicable. The Board will make their recommendations to the Sheriff on each nomination.

The Undersheriff shall prepare a letter for each nominee for the Sheriff's signature. He shall state the nature and the final disposition of the nomination. Copies of the nomination process shall be placed in the member's or professional staff's personnel file.

PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

The presentation of all awards should be held during a Sheriff's Office function deemed appropriate by the Sheriff.

The Professional Standards unit shall be responsible for notification of the employee(s) receiving awards by mail or in person ten (10) days prior to the ceremony. Efforts shall be made to invite the person(s) who made the nomination and any other people who are appropriate to the award presentation ceremony. The Professional Standards Unit shall make arrangements to have the awards properly displayed in a folder, frame and/or shadow box frame.

The Sheriff retains final approval of all ceremony arrangements.

Multiple Awards

No limit shall be placed on the number of medals, certificates or letters an individual may be awarded.

Only one kind of award shall be made for the same act, achievement, or period of service, except for the Blue Star Medal, which may be awarded by itself or together with another medal or certificate.

Once a medal has been presented to a member or professional staff, oak leaf clusters shall be presented in lieu of additional awards of the same medal.

Certificates and/or Letters of Commendation and Appreciation Awarded to Private Citizens

Whenever the Sheriff approves a recommendation to award a Certificate and/or Letter of Commendation or Appreciation to a private citizen, the Office of the Sheriff shall return the recommendation to Professional Standards Unit with any instructions the Sheriff may issue regarding the presentation of the award.

The Professional Standards Unit shall make arrangements for the Sheriff or the Sheriff's designated representative to present the certificate to the nominated private citizen.

Posthumous Awards

The appropriate next of kin shall be entitled to receive a service award earned by a deceased member or professional staff.

MAINTAINING RECORD FILE

It shall be the duty of the Professional Standards Unit to maintain a record file of all Medals, Certificates and Letters awarded to private citizens, members, and professional staff of this Department.

Once an employee or citizen is recognized by the Sheriff for a departmental award, it shall be the duty of the Professional Standards Lieutenant, or his designee, to prepare a press release for local news agencies. The press release shall contain the name of the employee or citizen receiving the award, the type of award presented and a brief description of the event leading to the award.

RELATED STANDARDS:

None

AFFECTED DIVISIONS:

All

DATE OF REVISIONS:

5/3/89

8/24/98

8/14/99

9/25/00

5/8/02

10/1/07

By Order of

ROBERT T. DOYLE
SHERIFF