

SANTA CLARA POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER 26.2

SERVICE AWARD PROGRAM

AMENDED DECEMBER 2014

26.2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this section is to describe the Service Awards Program designed to give official recognition to Santa Clara Police personnel.

These awards will properly honor employees who distinguish themselves by performing personal acts of bravery and courage, significantly above the normal call of duty or who by their own initiative, dedication, and courage perform an exceptional or exemplary service to their Department, fellow employees or the citizens they serve.

26.2.2 Classes of Awards

- Medal of Valor
- Medal of Merit
- Life Saving Award
- Distinguished Service Award
- Commendation Certificate or Letter
- Certificate of Appreciation

26.2.3 Definitions

Medal of Valor - Gold medal, blue & gold ribbon (Chief, Assistant Chief, Captain or Lieutenant), or blue and white ribbon (Sergeant, Officer, all other employees), valor uniform shirt bar (red, white and blue) and gold foil certificate in gold frame

The Departmental Medal of Valor shall be awarded to members who, while serving in an official capacity, distinguish themselves conspicuously by heroic action above and beyond the call of duty. Each nomination for the Medal of Valor shall be based on the following criteria:

- A strong possibility existed at the time the member acted that he/she could have suffered serious injury or death.
- The act was not foolhardy.
- The member did not use poor judgment or procedures that created the necessity for his/her acts.

Medal of Merit - Silver medal, blue & gold ribbon (Chief, Assistant Chief, Captain or Lieutenant), or blue and white ribbon (Sergeant, Officer, all other employees), merit uniform shirt bar (red) and gold foil certificate in gold frame.

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This award represents the Department's second highest honor for bravery. The recipient will have performed one or more acts of conspicuous bravery during a single incident or occurrence in which unusual and exceptional courage, above and beyond the demands of duty, were displayed, but to a lesser degree than required for the Medal of Valor.

Life Saving Award – No medal, lifesaving uniform shirt bar (white with red cross) and silver foil certificate in silver frame.

Awarded to an employee who saves a life by direct action or, under an emergency situation, sustains the life of another human being where significant exposure to danger is not a factor.

Distinguished Service Award – No medal, gold foil certificate in gold frame.

Awarded to an employee who distinguishes him/herself by performing exceptional service to duty, or an unusual performance of duty beyond that normally expected, or exemplary and outstanding work over an extended period of time.

Commendation Certificate or Letter – No medal, silver foil certificate in black frame (employee).

Awarded to an employee for performance well above average that demonstrates courage, devotion to duty, or exemplary work.

Certificate of Appreciation – No medal, black foil certificate in black frame (for non-employees).

This award consists of a citation or commendation letter made by Commanding Officers or the Chief of Police with or without review by the Service Awards Committee.

Special Award

This award is an appropriate method of recognition of, and respect for, the services of a police officer whose life was lost in the performance of duty.

This citation is awarded in the memory of sworn personnel killed in action or who died of wounds caused by traumatic injury sustained in the line of duty.

The award is presented by the Chief of Police to a designated member of the deceased officer's family, and would consist of a citation and the officer's badge mounted in a "shadow box".

Posthumous Award

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

26.2.4 Policy

The highest two awards, Medal of Valor and Medal of Merit, will be awarded with a certificate and shirt bar. The awards will come with a ribbon for hanging around the neck for the ceremony and can ultimately be displayed in a case.

Employees shall be encouraged to wear shirt bars with the uniform. The bar will be centered just above the nameplate. Only one shirt bar in each class will be worn. However, additional medals and shirt bars will be presented for subsequent awards. Those employees receiving an additional award will also be presented with a gold star to be pinned on the original shirt bar.

Certificates for awards will be on parchment paper and signed by the Mayor and Chief of Police. The certificate shall contain the name of the recipient and the date of presentation.

26.2.5 Procedure

The Awards committee will be responsible for evaluating, classifying and making recommendations of individuals that merit consideration for departmental awards. These recommendations, endorsed by the Committee, will be forwarded to the Chief of Police, accompanied by the appropriate and supporting documents, for his approval.

The Awards Committee will consist of at least 3 members and no more than 7 members made up of the following individuals:

- At least one representative of the Chief's Office
- At least one P.O.A. Representative
- At least one Unit 10 Representative
- Up to (4) additional department employees including Reserve Officers and Unit 5,7,8 members

26.2.6 Length of Service

The Awards Committee will be formed when the need to consider nominations is deemed necessary by the Chief of Police. There is no specific length of service requirement.

26.2.7 Committee Chairman

The Committee Chair (highest-ranking officer) shall call meetings of the Committee as needed to review reports they feel merit consideration for awards. Nominations will be received on a continuous basis.

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26.2.8 Nominations

Nominations for awards may come from any individual within the Department. They must be in written on a Department memorandum, signed by the originator, and should be forwarded through the chain of command to the Awards Committee Chairman. Copies of the nomination must then be submitted for review by the members of the Awards Committee. All award recommendations must be endorsed by a majority of the Awards Committee.

Award nominations may also come from private citizens or other law enforcement agencies. These documents will also be forwarded to the nominee's Division Commander and the Awards Committee Chairman. Included in the nomination shall be a full documentation of the incident, the circumstances of the event or events in chronological sequence, statements of witnesses and diagrams or photos if warranted.

26.2.9 Awards Presentation

Awards for Valor, Merit, Life Saving and Distinguished Service shall be presented at a City Council meeting or any other appropriate formal occasion. Commendation Certificates or letters will be presented at any time designated by the Chief of Police. The recipients will be advised, after the Board makes its determination, via the Chief's Office.

26.2.10 Outside Agency

Award recommendations to other agencies (U.S. Attorney General's Office, California Department of Justice, and any other law enforcement service agency) - All recipients of a Santa Clara Police Department Service Award will be eligible for awards from these outside agencies upon the recommendation of the Chief of Police.

26.2.11 Alternative Resolutions

The Board may return a nominee's name to the Division Commander recommending that a Letter of Commendation be inserted in the individual's personnel file.

26.2.12 Awards for Civilians

Purpose - To adopt an Awards Program and give formal recognition to deserving citizens who assist police officers in the performance of their duties and those rendering aid or assistance to victims of crimes or who, through crime prevention efforts, reduce the incidence of crime. These awards are to be handled by the Chief's Office.

Procedure – On Department memorandum, any officer may initiate a recommendation to the Chief for recognition of a deserving citizen. The recommendation must include an accurate account of the citizen's action and contain all necessary information to determine whether a certificate of appreciation and is in order. The Chief's Office can also initiate these awards.

Certificates of appreciation for deserving citizens will also be awarded at the City Council meetings or other formal occasions. The Chief of Police will present the awards. Letters of

appreciation will be mailed to the deserving citizens by the Chief's Office when merited.