

DEPARTMENT AWARDS

The purpose of this order is to define formal Department awards given to Department members, establish criteria for merit awards, and outline procedures by which awards are processed. For purposes of this General Order, the term “days” means calendar days.

3.09.01 TYPES OF AWARDS

A. MEDAL OF VALOR - Sworn members of the Department are eligible to receive this award. There are three types of medal of valor awards:

1. GOLD MEDAL OF VALOR - The Department's highest award for valor is merited when the following elements exist:

Outstanding bravery, above and beyond that expected in the line of duty, where:

- a. Failure to take such action would not justify censure.
- b. Risk to life existed and the member had sufficient time to evaluate that risk.
- c. The objective is of sufficient importance to justify the risk.
- d. The member accomplished the objective or was prevented from accomplishing the objective by incurring a disabling injury or death.

2. SILVER MEDAL OF VALOR - The Department's second highest award for valor is merited when the following elements exist:

- a. The member manifests outstanding bravery in the performance of duty under circumstances not within the provisions required for a Gold Medal of Valor.
- b. The member risks their life with full and unquestionable knowledge of the danger involved, or where a reasonable person would assume their life was in great danger.
- c. The objective is of sufficient importance to justify the risk.
- d. The member accomplished the objective or was prevented from accomplishing the objective by circumstances beyond their control.

3. BRONZE MEDAL OF VALOR - The Department's third highest award for valor is the Bronze Medal of Valor. The members of the Awards Committee shall evaluate the objective, the risk, and the degree of danger, and determine by their vote whether a bronze medal of valor shall be granted.

B. MERITORIOUS CONDUCT AWARD - Sworn members of the Department are eligible to receive this award. The Meritorious Conduct Award is merited by making an investigation and arrest in a serious felony case when it is shown that the arrest was made possible by diligent and painstaking research on the part of the member, and it

clearly appears that the member correctly weighed and evaluated all the clues and circumstances at their disposal. This award does not consider arrests made solely on the information provided by an informant.

- C. LIFE SAVING AWARD - The Awards Committee may confer this award to any Department member when the following criteria are met:
1. A member directly intervenes in a medical emergency by administering first aid, and
 2. The intervention directly resulted in the saving of a life.
- D. CRISIS INTERVENTION TEAM AWARD - Sworn members of the Department are eligible to receive this award. The Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Award may be granted to any member who demonstrates excellence in the use of CIT principles during an incident, and the member resolves the incident with minimal to no use of force. The CIT Award is granted to members by the CIT Mental Health Working Group; see DGO 5.21, *The Crisis Intervention Team Response to Person in Crisis Calls for Service*.
- E. PURPLE HEART AWARD - Sworn members of the Department are eligible to receive this award.

The Awards Committee may award a Purple Heart to a member of the Department who is wounded or receives a serious injury while on or off duty in an incident within the course and scope of police-related functions and/or responsibilities.

In determining whether to grant a Purple Heart Award, the Committee must consider all the circumstances, but primarily the degree of injury and factual situation facing the member during the incident. The Awards Committee may confer this award when both of the following criteria are met:

1. The injury or wound must have caused a serious impairment or physical condition requiring professional medical treatment, including but not limited to loss of consciousness, concussion, bone fracture, protracted loss of any bodily function or organ, extensive suturing, or serious disfigurement.
2. The member must have sustained the injury as a direct or indirect result of action that the member believed necessary to prevent the loss of life or serious injury to members of the public or other members of the Department, and that falls within the parameters of all Department rules and regulations.

The Awards Committee is not precluded from awarding any other medal of valor that the Committee believes is justified to a member who is awarded a Purple Heart.

- F. POLICE COMMISSION COMMENDATION - All Department members are eligible to receive this award. The Police Commission or the Department's Awards Committee may grant this commendation to members for extraordinary acts or contributions done in the performance of their duties. Examples of these acts include, but are not limited

to:

1. Actions performed while in a uniform or plainclothes assignment that do not fall within the criteria of the Medal of Valor or the Meritorious Conduct Award; or
2. Employing de-escalation techniques during an incident involving a subject armed with a weapon, exhibiting violent behavior, or making a credible threat of violence; and the member resolves the incident with minimal to no use of force; or
3. Contributing to the development of programs, policies or procedures that support the Department's mission and goals.

G. COMMUNITY-ORIENTED POLICING/PROBLEM-SOLVING AWARDS - All Department members are eligible to receive these awards. There are two types of community-oriented policing/problem-solving awards:

1. The Strategic Problem-Solving Award is granted to a member for developing an original approach to solving a significant, on-going problem in an effective way. The problem must be material and must relate to crime, disorder, or quality of life concerns.
2. The Community Engagement Award is granted to a member for developing a creative, innovative, original, and self-initiated community engagement project. The project must center on connecting the Department and its members with the community with the goal of building relationships and fostering trust. The project should be sustained for a duration of time and does not include limited or one-time actions.

H. UNIT CITATION AWARD - All Department members are eligible to receive this award. The Unit Citation Award may be conferred for outstanding performance by an organizational unit of the Department. The accomplishment must be the result of combined efforts by members of the unit. The Chief of Police will confer the award after their review of the nomination.

I. OFFICER OF THE MONTH/YEAR - Sworn members of the Department are eligible for this award. The Officer of the Month recognizes one sworn member each month (January through December) who uses good community policing practices and advances the "police officer as guardian" culture. On a rotating basis throughout the calendar year, each Assistant Chief, Deputy Chief, or Executive Director will designate one sworn member from their command (Officer, Inspector, Sergeant, or Lieutenant) as Officer of the Month. The Commander of the Community Engagement Division is responsible for notifying the Assistant Chiefs, Deputy Chiefs, or Executive Director of their assigned month. Sworn members from the Chief of Staff, Field Operations, Investigations, Administration, Special Operations, Strategic Management and Airport Bureaus are eligible for this award. In January of the following year, the Department will recognize one Officer of the Month as the Officer of the Year. The Officer of Year is awarded by a majority vote of the civil service rank Captains and sworn members of the Command Staff.

J. **NON-SWORN MEMBER OF THE MONTH/YEAR** - All non-sworn members of the Department are eligible to receive this award. This award recognizes a non-sworn member each month (January through December) who displays:

1. exemplary performance well above the expected standards of their normal responsibilities,
2. performance that supports the goals of the Department, and
3. conduct that reflects favorably on the SFPD.

On a rotating basis throughout the calendar year, each Assistant Chief, Executive Director, or Director will designate one non-sworn member from their command as Non-Sworn Member of the Month. The Deputy Chief of Administration is responsible for notifying the Assistant Chief, Executive Director, or Director of their assigned month. In January of the following year the Non-Sworn Member of the Year is awarded by a majority vote of the Assistant Chiefs, Executive Directors, and Directors.

K. **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE GRADUATE** - All Department members are eligible for this recognition. This recognition is awarded to Department members who graduated from the San Francisco Police Department (“SFPD”) Leadership Development Institute Program.

L. **CAPTAIN’S COMPLIMENTARY REPORT** - This report will be merited by any Department member who performs their duty in a manner showing dedication and service above that normally demanded by the Department, but not meeting the qualifications necessary for a Medal of Valor, Meritorious Conduct Award, Life Saving award, Crisis Intervention Team award, Police Commission Commendation, Community Oriented Policing/Problem Solving awards, or Unit Citation. The member's Commanding Officer may make a complimentary report of the incident to the Chief of Police. After approval by the Chief, the report shall become a part of the member's permanent personnel record.

3.09.02 POLICY

A. NOMINATING RULES

1. **TIME LIMIT** - Except when specifically exempted by the Chief of Police, nominations for Medal of Valor, Meritorious Conduct Award or Life Saving Award must be submitted no later than 60 days after the occurrence of the action for which the application has been made.
2. **BY WHOM** - Any supervisory officer who considers an action by a member deserving of an award may nominate the member. Members may also nominate themselves.

B. REWARD - Members will receive a reward for the following types of awards:

1. Medals of Valor
2. Purple Heart Award
3. Crisis Intervention Team Award
4. Meritorious Conduct Award

The amount of reward shall be discretionary but must not exceed the member's monthly salary.

C. SUCCESSIVE AWARDS - Successive awards for Medals of Valor, Meritorious Conduct, Life Saving, Crisis Intervention Team award, Police Commission Commendation, Purple Heart, Community Oriented Policing/Problem Solving awards and Unit Citation, shall be accompanied by bronze stars placed on the ribbon. A silver star shall signify 5 awards of the same type, and a gold star 10 or more.

D. AWARDS SCREENING COMMITTEE

1. **COMPOSITION -** The Awards Screening Committee shall be comprised of five (5) civil service rank Captains with the senior Captain serving as the Chair. The Chief of Police shall ensure that the composition of the Awards Screening Committee reflects the diversity of the Department.
2. **TERMS -** The members of the Awards Screening Committee shall serve a one-year term. At the end of their term, the members of the Awards Screening Committee shall be replaced by a new group of five (5) civil service rank Captains consistent with 3.09.02, D, 1 above.
3. **SAN FRANCISCO POLICE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION -** One member from the San Francisco Police Officers Association Executive Board shall be invited to participate in the Awards Screening Committee as an advisory, non-voting member.
4. **REVIEW -** The Awards Screening Committee shall review the Commanding Officer's submitted documents for each nominated member. The Awards Screening Committee may request, through the Police Commission Office, supporting documentation (e.g., letter from paramedics, medical records, Firearms Discharge Review Board (FDRB) findings, Department of Police Accountability (DPA) investigative findings, body worn camera footage, etc.) to corroborate a member's nomination for any award.

The Police Commission Office shall ensure that all nominated members' identifying information has been redacted prior to providing the nomination packages and supporting documents to the Awards Screening Committee.

5. **CONSENSUS -** A majority of the voting members on the Awards Screening Committee must agree to refer the nomination to the Awards Committee. A nomination denied by the Awards Screening Committee will be heard by the Awards Committee only with the

personal approval of the Chief of Police.

E. AWARDS COMMITTEE

1. COMPOSITION - The Awards Committee shall consist of the following:
 - a. The Chief of Staff acting as the Chair. In the Chief of Staff's absence, the Chief of Police shall designate the Chair for that particular meeting.
 - b. All civil service police Captains and sworn members of the Command Staff.
 - c. The Secretary of the Police Commission shall serve as the Secretary (non-voting member).

2. RULES - The Awards Committee shall be governed by the following rules:
 - a. Twenty-one members shall constitute a quorum.
 - b. Nominations shall be heard and voted upon separately; however, if two or more members are nominated for awards resulting from joint actions, their nominations may be heard and voted upon at the same time.
 - c. A member of the Awards Committee who makes a nomination on behalf of a member may participate in the hearing and be a witness but cannot vote on that nomination.
 - d. Except as noted in c. above, all voting members of the Awards Committee are required to cast a vote for each nomination. Members are not allowed to abstain unless they are recused from voting because of a conflict of interest.
 - e. Two-thirds of the members must agree upon a specific grade of award. Votes that were cast for a higher-grade award but did not total a two-thirds' majority will be applied to the next lower grade of award until a two-thirds' majority is reached. The Meritorious Conduct Award shall be voted as a single grade.
 - f. Voting shall be made by anonymous ballot.
 - g. All nominations approved by the Awards Committee shall be forwarded to the Chief of Police for their approval.

F. CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATIONS

1. The Chief of Police and two Police Commissioners appointed by the Police Commission President shall convene and certify the nominations for Medals of Valor and Meritorious Conduct Awards. The panel shall review the following when considering the members listed in each nomination:
 - a. open Internal Affairs Division – Administrative (IAD-A) complaints;
 - b. open DPA complaints;
 - c. open civil suits arising from employment in the Department; and
 - d. the findings related to an Officer Involved Shooting (“OIS”) when the nomination is related to that OIS.

2. The Police Commission Office shall provide the panel information related to 3.09.02, F, 1, a.-d. above for each member listed in a nomination.

3. Prior to certifying a member's nomination, the panel will confirm the following:
 - a. The recommended penalty for an open IAD-A or open DPA complaint is not termination.
 - b. An open IAD-A complaint, open DPA complaint, or open civil suit does not allege bias or sexual assault.
 - c. For nominations based on an OIS; IAD-A and DPA must have concluded their investigations, and the OIS must have been reviewed by the FDRB and found to be in policy; or eighteen (18) months have passed from the date of the OIS, whichever is sooner.
4. If a nomination cannot be certified, the Chief of Police and two Commissioners shall reconvene and reconsider the nomination every sixty (60) days, until such time as the panel either certifies or denies the member's nomination.
5. The Chief of Police shall provide the list of certified nominations for Medals of Valor and Meritorious Conduct Awards to the Police Commission for a vote to approve the nominations.

G. POLICE COMMISSION APPROVAL - The Medal of Valor or the Meritorious Conduct Award shall not be awarded until approved by the Commission.

3.09.03 PROCEDURES

A. NOMINATION PROCESS

1. NOMINATION/MEMORANDUM - The nomination for an award must be submitted on a memorandum forwarded to the member's Commanding Officer. It must describe in detail the actions of the member, showing how those actions meet the criteria established by this order and include any supporting documentation.
2. COMMANDING OFFICER'S REVIEW - The member's Commanding Officer will review the nomination to determine if the award is warranted based on the criteria set forth in this General Order. If not, it shall be returned to the nominating member with the reasons for rejection.
3. COMMANDING OFFICER'S MEMORANDUM - If the Commanding Officer approves the nomination, the Commanding Officer shall prepare a memorandum to the Chief of Police requesting the type of award. The memorandum should summarize the member's actions and the reason those actions meet the criteria set forth in this order.
4. FORWARDING - The Commanding Officer shall send the nomination package (nomination, memoranda, supporting documents, and body worn camera footage, if applicable) through the chain of command to the Chief of Police who will forward it to the Police Commission Office for screening procedures.

5. UNIT CITATION AWARD - A nomination for the Unit Citation Award shall be submitted on a memorandum forwarded to the members' Commanding Officer. The memorandum shall contain a detailed description of the unit's accomplishment and show how it affected the Department. The Commanding Officer shall forward the memorandum through the chain of command to the appropriate Assistant Chief, who will submit it to the Chief of Police for review. After reviewing and approving the nomination, the Chief of Police shall confer the award.

B. SCREENING PROCESS - The Police Commission Office shall send all nomination packages to the Awards Screening Committee members who will review them and take one of the following actions:

1. Approve and return the nomination package to the Police Commission Office.
2. Return the nomination package to the Police Commission Office and request further investigation.
3. Deny the nomination and return the nomination package to the Police Commission Office.

The Police Commission Office shall notify each member regarding the outcome of the Award Screening Committee's decision on their nomination. The notification to the member shall occur no later than thirty (30) days from date of the Awards Screening Committee meeting.

C. AWARDS COMMITTEE HEARING

1. PACKAGE - After receipt of an approved nomination, the Secretary of the Police Commission will send a copy of each nomination package to every Captain and sworn member of the Command Staff at least fourteen (14) days before the hearing. The Secretary will also set a date for the hearing and notify each Captain, sworn member of the Command Staff, and nominated member of the date at least seven (7) days prior to the hearing.
2. SUMMARY - At the awards hearing, the Commanding Officer who submitted the nomination will read the summary of the nomination in the presence of the nominated member(s).
3. WITNESSES - The Awards Committee, through the Police Commission Office, may call and examine civilian witnesses or non-nominated Department members at the Awards Committee Hearing.
4. DISCUSSION - The nominated member shall leave the hearing room while the committee discusses the matter and votes on it.

D. POST-HEARING PROCEDURES - The Chief of Police and two Police Commissioners appointed by the Police Commission President shall convene and certify the nominations for Medals of Valor and Meritorious Conduct Awards. The Chief of Police shall forward the approved nominations to the Police Commission, confirming the nominations have been certified pursuant to section 3.09.02.F. above.

After each certification meeting, the Police Commission Office shall notify the nominated member of the panel's decision no later than ten (10) days after the meeting.

E. OUTSIDE AWARDS NOMINATIONS - Members are encouraged to nominate fellow Department members for awards conferred by outside organizations (California Peace Officers Association Award, International Association of Chiefs of Police Awards, California Highway Patrol "10851" Award, Community Awards, etc.).

1. Members shall submit a memorandum and any supporting documents to their Commanding Officer nominating the member for an outside award. The memorandum shall describe the actions of the fellow member and explain how those actions fall within the criteria for award established by the outside organization.
2. The Commanding Officer shall send the memorandum and any supporting documents through the chain of command to the Chief of Police who will forward it to the outside organization, if approved. The nomination for an outside award does not require Awards Committee or Police Commission approval.
3. A member nominated for an outside award is not precluded from being nominated for an internal award described in section 3.09.01. A – L above.

F. U.S. ARMED FORCES SERVICE RIBBON - Members who served in the military prior to joining the SFPD or who are currently serving as a Reservist or National Guard are authorized to wear the Department's U.S. Armed Forces Service Ribbon in recognition and appreciation of their service.

G. SUPPLY - The Police Commission Office shall maintain a supply of medals and ribbons.

References

DGO 5.21, *The Crisis Intervention Team Response to Person in Crisis Calls for Service.*