

SHERIFF OF GARFIELD COUNTY

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GARFIELD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

POLICY / PROCEDURE

GENERAL

SUBJECT: PERFORMANCE RECOGNITION AWARDS

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 01, 2024

POLICY:

It is the policy of the Garfield County Sheriff's Office to recognize and reward meritorious service through an awards program to be administered under the procedures set forth herein.

PURPOSE:

The recognition of personal excellence is an important aspect of the Sheriff's Office activity. Presenting awards for meritorious service provides that recognition; thereby enhancing morale, reinforcing the team'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.

METHOD:

Structure of Awards Program:

A. Awards Board

1. The Sheriff 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.
2. The Board shall consist of members determined by the Sheriff.
3. If a member of the Awards Board is under consideration for receipt of an award, the member shall be excused from the Board for the period this award is under consideration.
4. All awards will be presented by the Sheriff, Undersheriff, Award Board Members or a designated supervisor at a formal ceremony.

B. Awards Classifications

1. Awards are classified as follows:
 - a. Class I award includes a medallion, a uniform pin, and a presentation certificate from the Sheriff for the team member's personnel file.
 - b. Class II award includes a uniform pin, a presentation certificate from the Sheriff for the team member's personnel file.
 - c. Class III award includes a presentation certificate from the Sheriff for the team member's personnel file.

C. Awards

1. Medal of Valor

Awarded to members for conspicuous gallantry while acting in the line of duty. Presented to officers for acts of exceptional bravery performed at a very high risk to their lives with full awareness of the danger involved. This award will be presented as a Class I award.

2. Life-Saving Award

To be conferred upon any member of the organization whose actions directly contribute to saving or significantly prolonging human life. This award will be presented as a Class I award.

3. Certificate of Commendation

Presented in recognition for a high degree of competence and professionalism in the performance of duties. This includes exemplary conduct during a field incident operation, outstanding administrative work, the effective handling of a criminal investigation, the organization of a beneficial program, designing and conducting a course of training, and commendable participation in any activity that improves the organization's functioning or brings credit upon the organization in anyway. This award will be presented as a Class II award.

4. Years of Service

Presented in recognition of longevity beginning at 5 years of employment and being awarded in 5-year increments. This award will be presented with a pin.

5. Letter of Recognition

Presented to members who perform their duties in a manner that demonstrated professionalism, devotion to duty, and dedication to the performance of the mission. This award may also be presented for the submission of any suggestion subsequently adopted by the organization that materially improves the efficiency of the agency. This award will be presented as a Class III award.

6. Citizen Commendation

This award may be presented to any person who is not a member of the organization who has materially aided the organization 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 organization as a whole in any aspect of the organization's administration or operations. This award will be presented as a Class III award.

7. Volunteer of the Year Award

The organization will establish a protocol to determine the Volunteer of the Year Award by nominations from organization members, Volunteer Coordinators or by a citizen for exemplary performance while volunteering for programs established under the Garfield County Sheriff's Office. The awards shall be considered and presented in accordance with this policy.

Procedures:

A. Recommendations for Awards

1. Any member may recommend another member for any award. More than one person may make recommendations jointly.
2. Award recommendations shall be 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 the person or those persons. Any and all reports reflecting or detailing such actions need to be added for consideration as well. (A recommendation form is included as an addendum to this policy.)
3. The recommendation form may be accompanied by supporting documentation as needed.
4. The recommendation shall be forwarded to the Professional Standards Division, who will forward to the Awards Board members, then reviewed, approved or modified by the Sheriff and/or Undersheriff.
5. Any members of the organization who is aware of any significant assistance by a citizen may nominate that citizen for a Citizen Commendation.
6. Letters from citizens commending an employee shall be forwarded to the Professional Standards Division, and then forwarded as described previously.

B. Determination of Awards

1. All recommendations for awards are to be kept on file in the Professional Standards Division office pending the next meeting of the Awards Board.
2. The Awards Board shall meet monthly or at such other intervals as directed by the Sheriff. Special meetings may be held at the discretion of the Sheriff to consider recommendations requiring the Board's immediate attention.
3. The Awards Board shall review the circumstances of the recommendation and collect additional facts pertinent to the recommendation.
4. Upon completion of the review process, the Board shall consider the case in closed session and vote upon the recommendation. A majority of the Board members present and voting shall be sufficient to determine the Board's recommendation.
5. The Board may choose one of the following:
 - A. That the case meets the standards for the award that is the subject of the recommendation, and the award is therefore approved, or
 - B. 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
 - C. That the facts as currently known do not justify and award at this time.
6. Following the Board's deliberations, a written recommendation shall be forwarded to the Sheriff and/or Undersheriff setting forth the Board's findings.
7. Upon receipt of the Board's recommendation, the Sheriff and/or Undersheriff may approve, disapprove, or modify the Board's findings.
8. Only one award shall be made to an individual for any act, achievement, or period of meritorious service. However, there is no limit to the number of awards that may be presented to an individual for separate acts.
9. The Awards Board shall maintain the Awards Case File. The file shall contain copies of each recommendation of the Award Board. This includes all recommendations for awards to members and citizens, together with copies of any supporting documents submitted with the recommendation. The Awards Case File shall be open for inspection at the discretion of the Sheriff.
10. Prior to January 1 of each year, the Board shall prepare and forward to the Sheriff and/or Undersheriff 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.

C. Notification of Awards

1. Personnel for whom awards have been approved shall be notified at the designated department meeting during the Awards Board presentation. In exceptional cases, the notification may be made directly by the Sheriff, Undersheriff, or his designee.
2. Where appropriate, press releases regarding awards shall be made available to local media.
3. All awards shall be made a matter of record in the employee's personnel file. All awards shall be considered with future personnel decisions, such as promotion assignment to a particular duty or location.
4. A copy of the citizen's letter of commendation shall be forwarded to the employee who made such recommendation and another copy shall be posted on bulletin boards or otherwise disseminated within the organization.
5. Citizens who have received commendations for assistance to the organization shall be notified in a similar manner.

D. Presentation of Awards

1. Presentation of all awards other than letters of Recognition shall be made at a formal ceremony deemed appropriate by the Sheriff. Letters of Recognition may also be presented at a formal ceremony at the discretion of the Sheriff or his designee.
2. During award ceremonies, presentation of awards shall be made by the Sheriff, Undersheriff, Awards Board members or their designee.
3. All personnel not otherwise engaged in duty assignments shall be encouraged to attend presentations. The recipient's supervisors shall be present at the ceremony whenever possible.
4. Members of the recipient's family shall be invited to attend the ceremony.
5. Member of the local press shall be invited to attend presentations of awards of the Medal of Valor and the Life Saving Medal.
6. Normally the individual who has earned the award will accept the award in person at the presentation ceremony.
7. Posthumous awards shall be received by the next of kin. "Next of Kin" is normally construed to mean one of the following:
 - A. Widow or Widower
 - B. Eldest Son or Daughter
 - C. Parent
 - D. Eldest Brother or Sister.(The order of preference may be modified as circumstance dictate in individual cases.)
8. Posthumous awards may be presented at the memorial or funeral services for that individual or at such other time as is deemed appropriate by the next of kin, and shall be presented by the Sheriff and/or Undersheriff only.
9. Commendations to civilians may be presented at a formal ceremony at the discretion of the Sheriff, but only with the prior approval of the citizen concerned.

E. Wearing of Awards

1. Medals are not intended to be worn on the duty uniform.
2. Award bars shall be worn on duty uniform. Bars shall be placed on the uniform as directed by this policy.
3. Multiple bars shall be displayed in the order of preference of the award, with the highest award placed on top of others.
4. Bars shall be maintained in good condition at all times.

5. No medals, ribbons, or unauthorized pins of any type shall be worn on the uniform unless the organization specifically authorizes such wear.
6. Authorized GCSO bars, collar brass (i.e. approved F.T.O. and K-9 pins) and approved AHRT skill level pin/insignia are the only approved uniform insigne.
7. Authorized insigne will be structured as follows:
 - A. Highest to lowest award/commendation bar above authorized name plate with the GCSO Years of Service bar directly above the name plate.
 - B. AHRT skill level pin/insignia above all awards/commendation bars and name plate.