

# **COVINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE**

**Subject: AWARDS AND COMMENDATIONS**

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## **Purpose**

To establish procedures for the recognition of police department employees who have performed services in the furtherance of the department's goals and objectives, and for the recognition of exemplary actions and deeds by members of the department.

### **I. Statement of Policy**

It shall be the policy of the Covington Police Department to recognize any acts of meritorious service, outstanding achievement and exceptional bravery performed by its employees and to grant awards for such acts. The judicious administration of this policy will serve to enhance and reinforce the value of the awards. The criteria represent precise qualifications of eligible members and specific details on the requisite qualifications for receiving designated awards. No employee shall win two awards such as Rookie of the Year and Officer of the Year within the same year. In the event of a double winner, the runner-up will win. Employee of the Quarter winners may not be nominated again for two subsequent quarters after winning the award.

This policy also establishes a Commendation Review Board to consider and recommend all commendations within the department.

### **II. Departmental Awards**

#### **A. Police Star**

1. This award shall be presented for acts of heroism or bravery where there is a significant possibility of serious physical injury or loss of life.
2. Employees shall receive a certificate, medal, ribbon bar and plaque.
3. In addition, the Chief of Police may allow the employee time off with pay.
4. The award shall be presented by the Mayor, Chief of Police, and the employee's supervisor.
5. Appropriate press coverage should be present during presentation of award.

B. Medal of Valor

1. This is the department's version of the Purple Heart. It is awarded to an employee who, in the direct course of police work, receives a serious wound or injury. This award will also be awarded in case of a fatality.
2. This award will not normally be awarded for injuries sustained while on routine patrol assignments such as motor vehicle accidents. This award also will not normally be given for injuries sustained while the officer/employee was engaged in an activity that would be considered inappropriate or negligent. The Commendation Review Board shall make any decision in this area based on information provided to them.
3. This award may also be given for a performance of valor above and beyond the normal call of duty.
4. Employees will receive a certificate, medal and ribbon bar.
5. The award will be presented by the Chief of Police and the employee's supervisor.
6. The Chief of Police may also allow the employee to take time off with pay.
7. Appropriate press coverage should be present upon presentation of the award.

C. Meritorious Service Award

1. This award may be granted to any employee for an outstanding act where there was a threat of seriously bodily injury or a life saving deed. It may also be awarded for outstanding investigative performance or criminal apprehension.
2. The employee will receive a certificate, medal and ribbon bar.
3. The award will be presented by the Chief of Police and the employee's supervisor.
4. In addition, the Chief may allow the employee time off with pay.
5. Appropriate press coverage should be present during the presentation of the award.

D. Humanitarian Service Award

1. This award may be presented to any employee who has made a positive impact in our community, who has promoted human welfare and reform, who has diligently pursued promoting humanistic values in one person's life or in the lives of several people.
2. The employee will receive a certificate, medal and ribbon bar.
3. The award will be presented by the Chief of Police and the employee's supervisor

4. Appropriate press coverage should be present during the presentation of the award.
- E. Departmental Commendation
1. This award may be granted to any employee for an outstanding act or achievement, which brings credit to the department and involves performance above and beyond that which is required for the employee's basic assignment.
  2. Employees will receive a certificate and ribbon bar presented by the Chief of Police and their supervisor.
  3. The employee will receive a certificate and ribbon bar presented by the Chief of Police and their supervisor.
- F. Police Officer of the Year
1. This award shall be presented to a police officer or investigator who has been with the department two years or longer and who best exemplifies the qualities, characteristics and the effectiveness of a professional police officer. This award is presented to the officer who goes above and beyond the call of duty in their service for the police department. Their actions must place them above other officers in similar categories, if such categories exist.
  2. The award may be awarded to a member of the department who:
    - a. earned the recognition of his/her superiors for service which would entail such action as exceptional courage, bravery, or self-sacrifice;
    - b. saved the life of another;
    - c. performed exceptional meritorious service to the department in duties of great responsibility. For service not related to actual crisis, the term "duties of great responsibility" applies to a narrow range of positions other than in crisis situations and requires evidence of significant achievement.
  3. To be considered for this award, candidates should have accomplished at least the following throughout the last twelve months:
    - a. demonstrated an above average overall job performance as evidenced by work related documents.
    - b. consistently displayed a professional appearance and demeanor, which is well documented and recognized as common knowledge.
    - c. had no disciplinary action requiring an administrative action, resulting in unpaid leave. Any pending actions must not be of a severe nature.
    - d. sick leave records indicate no sick leave abuse.

- e. the candidate has performed some meritorious achievement that is worthy of recognition because of the honor that achievement has bestowed upon the officer and the department.
  4. Each Captain, Lieutenant, and Sergeant may nominate one person for officer of the year. Each Captain, Lieutenant, and Sergeant may make the nomination through Guardian Tracking or by email to the Chairman of the Commendation Review Board and address the following:
    - a. work ethic;
    - b. level of professionalism;
    - c. willingness to work with others;
    - d. job activity;
    - e. meritorious achievement;
    - f. overall performance as a police officer;
    - g. any additional information that would be pertinent to this specific award.
  5. Documentation and supporting evidence must be included to substantiate this award (i.e. incident reports; firsthand knowledge; any other supporting facts). The Commendation Review Board will then review all recommendations and determine which officers qualify for consideration for the award. The names of those officers will be placed on a ballot, along with a brief synopsis of their qualifications and voted on by all departmental employees.
  6. The Commendation Review Board will review all ballots and recommendations and make a final recommendation to the Chief of Police.
  7. This officer will receive a certificate, award, and ribbon bar.
  8. This award will be presented by the Chief of Police and the employee's supervisor at the annual awards banquet.
- G. Rookie of the Year
1. This award shall be presented to the police officer who has been mandated less than two and one half years, who best exemplifies the qualities, characteristics and the effectiveness of a new police officer and one who distinguishes himself/herself by a great degree of meritorious service or achievement.
  2. Rookie officers will be voted on by supervisors and the field training officers based on their overall performance and information in Guardian Tracking. All rookie officers will be placed on a ballot which will then be reviewed by the Commendation board and the officer with the majority of the votes shall be selected as Rookie of the Year.

3. An officer can only win this award one time.
4. This officer will receive a certificate, award and ribbon bar.
5. This award will be presented by the Chief of Police and the employee's supervisor at the annual awards banquet.

#### H. Military Veteran

Employees who served in one of the United States military services and were honorably discharged or retired from said service.

#### I. Division Employees of the Year

1. This award shall be presented to the division employee who best exemplifies the qualities, characteristics and overall effectiveness of a departmental employee and must be an accumulation of accomplishments throughout the year. The employees who have won Division Employees of the Quarter are eligible for this award. To be considered for this award, an employee will have:
  - a. performed above and beyond the call of duty in their service to the department.
  - b. earned the recognition of his/her superiors for outstanding service to the department.
  - c. performed exceptional meritorious service to the department in duties of great responsibility. For service not related to actual crisis, the term "duties of great responsibility" applies to a narrow range of positions other than in crisis situations and requires evidence of significant achievement.
2. Captains, Lieutenants, and Sergeants will vote to determine the winners.
3. The employees selected shall also be considered for the City of Covington's Employee of the Year Award.
4. The employees will receive a certificate, award and ribbon bar at the annual awards banquet.

#### J. Employees of the Quarter

1. This award shall be presented to departmental employees who have exemplified professional service in his or her job function.
2. Employees are voted on by all personnel each quarter.
3. Elections will be held during the months of December, March, June, and September.
4. There shall be three (3) employees of the quarter: one from the Patrol Division; one from the Criminal Investigative Division which includes DEA; and one from Support Services/Community Outreach Division, which also includes the Administrative Division.

5. Employees of each division may nominate an individual from their division in Guardian Tracking or by email. All nominations shall be submitted to the Division Captain of the nominee. Division Captains will evaluate the nomination and determine that there are no disqualifying factors. Division Captains will then send the nominations to the Chairman of the Commendation Board. The Chairman will place the names on the ballot and all employees will vote to determine the winners.
  6. Employees shall receive a certificate presented by the Chief of Police and the employee's supervisor.
- K. Field Training Officer
- Awarded to any officer who has successfully completed the P.O.S.T. recognized Field Training Officer program.
- L. Expert Pistol
- Awarded to any officer who qualifies with a yearly average of 98% or better during the first and second pistol qualifications.
- M. Intermediate Certification
- Awarded to any officer who has successfully completed all the required courses as set forth by P.O.S.T. for the intermediate certification program and has obtained the certification.
- N. Advanced Certification
1. Awarded to any officer who has successfully completed all the required courses set forth by P.O.S.T. for the advanced certification program and has obtained the certification.
  2. Upon earning the advanced certification award, the intermediate certification award will be removed from the uniform.
- O. Supervisory Certification
1. Awarded to any officer who has successfully completed all the required courses set forth by P.O.S.T. for the supervisory certification program and has obtained the certification.
  1. Upon earning the supervisory certification award, the advanced certification award will be removed from the uniform.
- P. Management Certification
1. Awarded to any officer who has successfully completed all the required courses set forth by P.O.S.T. for the management certification program and has obtained the certification.
  2. Upon earning the management certification award, the supervisory certification award will be removed from the uniform.

- Q. Emergency Services Unit  
Awarded to any officer who is currently serving as a member of the Covington Police Department Emergency Services Unit.
- R. Retired SWAT  
Awarded to any officer who has served a minimum of 5 years on the old Covington Police Department/ Newton County Sheriff's Office SWAT team or the Emergency Services Unit.
- S. Honor Guard  
Awarded to any officer who is currently serving or has served on the Covington Police Department's Honor Guard.
- T. K-9  
Awarded to any officer who currently serves or has served in the capacity as K-9 handler.
- U. Hostage Negotiator  
Awarded to any officer who has completed the P.O.S.T. recognized Hostage Negotiator Course and serves as a departmental negotiator.
- V. Instructor  
Awarded to any officer who has successfully completed the P.O.S.T. recognized instructor course.
- W. Drug Recognition Expert  
Awarded to any officer who has completed the P.O.S.T. recognized Drug Recognition Expert course.
- X. Accident Reconstructionist  
Awarded to any officer who has completed all levels of the P.O.S.T. recognized Accident Reconstructionist program.
- Y. Crime Scene Technician  
Awarded to personnel who have completed the P.O.S.T. recognized Crime Scene Technician program.
- Z. Associate/Bachelors/Master/Doctorate  
Awarded to personnel who have obtained the mentioned above degrees from an institution of higher learning.
- AA. Physical Fitness  
Awarded to any officer who has maintained a 3.0 yearly average on the Covington Police Department's physical fitness assessment.

**BB Initial Accreditation**

Awarded to any officer who was present during the initial accreditation process in 1985. These officers shall wear this pin in lieu of the accreditation pin.

**CC. Accreditation**

Awarded to any officer who was employed at time of the accreditation process.

**DD. Webber Seavey**

Awarded to any officer who was employed during the Webber Seavey award presentation ceremony.

**EE. Crisis Intervention Team**

Awarded to any officer who has successfully completed the P.O.S.T. recognized Crisis Intervention Team course.

**FF. F. B. I. National Academy**

Awarded to any officer who has successfully completed the F. B. I. National Academy training program.

**GG. Georgia Law Enforcement Command College**

Awarded to any officer who has successfully completed the Georgia Law Enforcement Command College program.

**HH. Special Operations**

Awarded to officers who served or supported special operations teams or task forces, such as DEA, EMDET, SIU, etc.

**II. Longevity**

Awarded to personnel for continuous service at two and five year marks and subsequently every fifth year thereafter.

**JJ. Special Recognition: Letters of Appreciation**

Supervisors are highly encouraged to promptly recognize the outstanding performance of their subordinates. This can be accomplished by writing a letter of appreciation to the employee detailing the circumstances that warranted the recognition on departmental letterhead. The letter will be written in the department's approved format. Supervisors should seek the endorsement of the Chief or Assistant Chief of Police. (See format below).

**III. Retiring Employees**

1. Retirees from the Covington Police Department are eligible to receive their badge and ID once they achieve 10 years of service or more along with a plaque recognizing their years of service.



2. Officers with 20 years of service or more are eligible for their ID, badge, service award (not a plaque) and duty weapon they carried on duty or another weapon or gift to commemorate their years of service. In the event that an officer doesn't want their duty weapon, a weapon of their choice may be purchased by Police Who Care according to the officer's years of service. Weapons to be given to officers will be limited to handguns only.

**IV. Wearing of Ribbon Bars**

- A. Ribbon bars may be worn on the daily uniform, however are mandatory when wearing the dress uniform. Center all ribbons over the right pocket. The bottom of the ribbon bar shall be flush with the top of the right pocket. Ribbon bars will be worn in order of precedence as seen in the diagram below with 1 being the most important and 9 being the least important. A maximum of nine ribbon bars may be worn on the uniform at a time.

3	2	1
6	5	4
9	8	7

- B. Order of Precedence, in descending order:
  1. Police Star
  2. Medal of Valor
  3. Meritorious Service
  4. Humanitarian Service
  5. Departmental Commendation
  6. Police Officer of the Year
  7. Rookie of the Year
  8. Employee of the Year
  9. Associate/Bachelors/Masters/Doctorate
  10. F. B. I. Academy
  11. Georgia Law Enforcement Command College
  12. Initial Accreditation
  13. Accreditation
  14. Field Training Officer
  15. S.W.A.T. or Retired S.W.A.T.
  16. Pistol Expert

17. Intermediate/Advanced/Supervisory/Management Certification
18. Instructor
19. Drug Recognition Expert
20. Accident Reconstruction Expert
21. Honor Guard
22. K-9
23. Hostage Negotiator
24. Crime Scene Technician
25. Physical Fitness
26. Webber Seavey
27. Crisis Intervention Team
28. Special Operations
29. Longevity

- C. On special occasions, the medal may be worn in lieu of the ribbon bar. The officer or employee will be directed to wear the medal.

#### **IV. Commendation Review Board**

- A. The Commendation Review Board is hereby established consisting of personnel appointed by the Chief of Police from all divisions within the police department.
- B. The Board shall have a chairperson chosen by the other members of the Board.
- C. Selection of the members is made by the Chief of Police. Upon selection to the Board, members will serve a minimum of two years.

#### **V. Responsibilities of the Board**

- A. The Commendation Review Board is responsible for reviewing all recommendations for awards or commendations.
- B. The Board shall decide what award is appropriate based on the information provided and shall forward a recommendation to the Chief of Police for review. If the Board determines that no award is appropriate, they will make that recommendation.
- C. The Board shall have the authority to convene as often as necessary as directed by the Chairperson.

#### **VI. Procedures for Making Recommendations**

- A. A recommendation for an award can be made by anyone in the police department, as well as any citizen. All recommendations shall be in writing on a

form approved by the Board (note: recommendations from citizens may be taken if received as a letter in the mail or email).

- B. Written recommendations may be delivered to any member of the Board at any time; however, recommendations should be made within ten (10) days of the act or action deserving recognition, if possible.
- C. The Review Board Chairman will notify the employee's supervisor and the Chief of Police upon receipt of the written recommendation.

**VII. Review Board Procedures**

- A. The Chairperson shall schedule a board meeting to review all recommendations.
- B. The Chairperson shall appoint a board member to gather all information concerning the act, to include gathering incidents reports, summary of internal affairs reports (if necessary), and other written data, as well as interviewing officers, citizens or witnesses.
- C. Once all information is gathered, the Review Board will meet again to review the report and all applicable data.
- D. Once a decision is reached, notification will be sent to the Chief of Police and the employee's supervisor.

***This SOP supersedes any SOP previously issued.***

BY ORDER OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE:

*Stacey L. Cotton*  
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Chief of Police