



POLICY & PROCEDURE

PORTAGE POLICE DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: **COMMENDATIONS**

SCOPE: All Department Personnel
DISTRIBUTION: Policy & Procedure Manual

REFERENCE: 2021 WI Act 82

NUMBER: 4.01
ISSUED: 09/12/2024
EFFECTIVE: 09/12/2024
 RESCINDS
 AMENDS
WILEAG 5TH EDITION
STANDARDS: 4.1.1

INDEX AS: Awards
Commendations
Merit Review

PURPOSE: This Policy & Procedure establishes a specific procedures and guidelines for awards and commendations issued to members of the Portage Police Department, Volunteers in Policing (VIPS) and citizens whose meritorious actions meet established standards. These standards provide for uniformity and consistency in the granting of awards and ensure that these awards are properly valued as representing truly significant meritorious behavior.

Awards or commendations are not to be granted without proper cause.

This Policy & Procedure consists of the following numbered sections:

- I. INTRODUCTION
- II. AWARDS COMMITTEE COMPOSITION AND AUTHORITY
- III. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AWARDS
- IV. AWARDS COMMITTEE REVIEW
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I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The Portage Police Department has established high standards of personal performance for its members and expects that their conduct exemplifies the highest of professional standards. Those members whose actions, specific achievements, and overall performance exceed department standards deserve special recognition in the form of a commendation or award.

II. AWARDS COMMITTEE COMPOSITION AND AUTHORITY

- A. Awards Committee Composition and Authority: The Chief of Police shall appoint the Awards Committee that will consist of: Sworn and non-sworn staff and the Patrol Lieutenant. The Assistant Chief shall act as a liaison between the committee and the chief but will not have any voting privileges. The committee will be made up of at least 6 people. A chairperson will be appointed by the committee and confirmed with approval from the Chief.
- B. The Awards Committee with the approval of the Chief of Police has authority to issue all awards and commendations. Commendations are affirmed by the Chief's signature and are issued at the sole discretion of the Chief.
- C. The department Awards Committee issues awards only after review and recommendation. Generally, awards will be presented annually at an awards ceremony organized by the Awards Committee with input from the Command Staff. During extraordinary circumstances, awards or recognition may be presented at City Council or other venue determined jointly between a majority of the Awards Committee and the Chief of Police.
- D. When the Awards Committee receives written proposals for the granting of established department awards, the committee will review each proposal, conduct an additional investigation if deemed necessary, and make a recommendation to the Chief of Police.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AWARDS

- A. An individual that has personal knowledge of an act, achievement, or service, and believes that such conduct may qualify for formal recognition can initiate recommendations for awards or commendations. Additional guidelines include:
 - 1. Any department employee or citizen may submit a nomination to the Awards Committee.

2. All recommendations for commendation shall be submitted in writing on an inter-office memo or department form to the Chairperson of the Awards Committee and the Chief in a timely manner.
3. Awards may also be presented to citizens for their contribution to law enforcement.
4. Recommendations may be accepted at any point for the current calendar year.

IV. AWARDS COMMITTEE BOARD REVIEW

- A. The information considered by the Awards Committee includes, but is not limited to:
 1. The significance of the action, achievement, or service that improved the department's ability to accomplish its mission.
 2. Identify the action that clearly goes beyond the norm, and/or the result of the action that improved morale, discipline, or the effectiveness of the department.
 3. The Chairperson will schedule Awards Committee meetings to discuss the merits of all submissions.
 5. The committee will discuss the nominations that were submitted and the information to support the awards, and make a recommendation to the Chief.
 6. After approval of the awards by the Chief, the chairperson will make necessary arrangements for ordering the medals, plaques and/or pins for those persons receiving awards for that calendar ceremony.
 7. The Chief or designee will be responsible for presenting awards.
 8. Awards Committee discussions leading to the determination of an award are to remain confidential.
 9. Commendations and awards become a permanent part of the employee's personnel record and the issued awards will remain the property of the member to whom they were granted/

V. OFFICER COMMENDATIONS

- A. These awards will be distributed to officers by the Chief or designee. Additional documentation will be added to the officer's personnel file, dependent on the type of commendation.

1. Supervisory Commendation / Department Memo - May be issued by any Supervisor in recognition of some noteworthy accomplishment by a department member. The "supervisory commendation" shall be documented in the officer's evaluation file and should be reflected in the officer's annual evaluation for that year. Supervisory Commendation will be written on standard department letterhead outlining the accomplishments being recognized. When memos are issued, one copy will be forwarded to the Chief to be placed in the personnel records of the person receiving the recognition and the original will be given to the employee. Additional copies should be forwarded to other supervisory staff.
2. Letter of Commendation - A Letter of Commendation is a higher-level commendation, often issued for either an outstanding single action or outstanding performance over a sustained period of time. "Letter of Commendations" are issued on department letterhead and addressed to the recipient with a brief description of the action or service for which the commendation is issued.
 - a. Letter of Achievement/Recognition -this form shall be used to recognize exceptionally good work, diligence in accomplishing a specific task, and exceptional work skills. This may be used to recognize above average investigative procedure or public relations accomplishments. It may reflect arrests by employees, or groups of employees, resulting in a successful conclusion of a case. It may reflect the conclusion of a special project or community service.
 1. Letters may be initiated by a supervisor by means of a written memo. The memo may be supported by copies of documents such as a police report.
 2. This information will be forwarded to the Chief.
 3. A Letter of Achievement may only be written by command-level personnel. These are the Lieutenants, Assistant Chief of Police, and the Chief of Police. Each administrator may initiate a letter of achievement without recommendation for any other source. Letters of Achievement are to be presented to the employee on a formal printed letterhead outlining the circumstances of the action.
 4. A copy of these documents will be placed in the employee's personnel file.

VI. OFFICER/CIVILIAN AWARDS

A. Recipients of these awards will generally receive their awards at an annual awards recognition ceremony. In addition, a letter on department letterhead and addressed to the recipient with a brief description of the action or service for which the award is issued will be distributed to the officer and a copy will be placed in their permanent personnel file.

1. **Medal of Honor – Posthumous** - May be presented to the family of a department member who is killed in the line of duty, or who dies as a result of wounds or injuries received in the line of duty. This award may be presented in the form of plaque or whatever may be appropriate to honor the fallen member.
2. **Medal of Honor** - May be awarded to law enforcement officer(s) who, in the line of duty, intelligently and heroically distinguishes themselves through an act of gallantry at imminent personal hazard to life, with knowledge of the risk, above and beyond the call of duty. This award will be presented in the form of an award uniform pin and plaque.
3. **Medal of Valor Award** – The Valor Award is granted to any police officer that, while acting on behalf of the department, engages in conduct directed at the protection of life or bodily security of another in the face of high risk of bodily harm or death and in a manner that exemplifies courage and the highest level of professionalism. The recipient of this award need not have been on duty at the time of the conduct but needs to be acting within the jurisdictional scope of the department. In the event the conduct qualifying for this award results in the death of the officer, this award may be given posthumously to an appropriate survivor. This award will be presented in the form of an award uniform pin and plaque.
4. **Distinguished Service Award** - The Distinguished Service Award is given to any member of this department who engages in sustained performance or activities which are clearly beyond the expectations of that member's current assignment and which exemplify the highest level of professional commitment to the mission of the department. This medal may be awarded to a law enforcement officer retiree who has served with distinction. This award will be presented in the form of a plaque.
5. **Meritorious Service Award** -This service award may be considered for those people who have contributed greatly to the betterment of their community. It may be bestowed upon retirees who have dedicated their professional life to the City and citizens of Portage. This award may also be given for other extended extraordinary community services. The award may be given posthumously. This award will be presented in the form of an award uniform pin and plaque.

- 6. Team Member of the Year Award** - Awarded to one staff member annually in recognition of those qualities which distinguish themselves as a professional in the field of law enforcement. It shall serve as recognition among fellow department members and the public alike for their individual dedication to duty, outstanding job performance, high moral character, professional law enforcement image, and bearing. The Chief of Police or his designee shall solicit names of possible candidates from the members of this agency. Included with a nomination will be a detailed reason for the nomination. Nominated finalists will be placed on a ballot along with information on each candidate. A vote by all members of this agency will determine the person to be honored as Team Member of the Year. The returns will be kept secret until the time in which the award is presented. This award will be presented in the form of an award uniform pin and plaque.
- 7. Life Saving Award** - The Life Saving Award is given to any member of this department whose actions significantly contribute to the saving or prolonging of the life of another by actions which are beyond the scope of duties normally performed as a member of the department. The recipient of this award need not have been on duty at the time of the conduct but needs to be acting within the jurisdictional scope of the department. This award will be presented in the form of an award uniform pin and certificate.
- 8. Lifesaving Attempt** - May be awarded to Portage Police Department employees in appreciation for prompt and unselfish act of rendering aid and assistance to another human being that was of an extraordinary effort, though despite the efforts, the person did not survive. This award will be presented in the form of a certificate.
- 9. Purple Heart Award** - The Purple Heart Award is given to any member of the department who, while acting on behalf of the department, engages in conduct directed at the protection of life or bodily security as members of the department and receives a serious injury in the line of duty. The injury must be of sufficient gravity to require professional medical treatment. This award is intended to recognize employees who are injured as a result of felonious assaults or injuries resulting from shootings, fires, and explosion, etc. The recipient of this award need not have been on duty at the time of the conduct, but needs to be acting within the jurisdictional scope of the department. This award will be presented in the form of an award uniform pin and plaque.
- 10. Team Effort Award** - This award may be awarded to a group who, collectively, achieve a significant goal or achievement. This group can be any combination of members from the Portage Police Department, another law enforcement agency, sworn or non-sworn, or other entity working with the Portage Police Department on a collective mission. This award will be presented in the form of a letter, certificate, or plaque depending on the circumstances.

VII. OFFICER SERVICE AWARDS

- A. The following awards are granted to members of the department upon their attainment of the specific measurable standards set for the award and/or upon recommendation of the Awards Committee.
- B. Officers may choose to display total years of police professional service. Professional service (including years spent in law enforcement positions other than the City of Portage) may be displayed by the individual officer. Military service in units such as the Military Police, Security Forces or Shore Patrol is not within this category. All military service is recognized separately by an enamel police award that is blue and red in color with a gold eagle centered. This device recognizes the wearer as an Honorably Discharged veteran of the regular Armed Forces or all of their Reserve and National Guard components. A person presently serving in a reserve component may wear the device as well.
- C. Actual military service ribbons may be worn above the left breast pocket for special occasions such as national holidays, parades, funerals or courts of honor. Only ribbons, decorations or awards issued and noted on the individual's Military Form DD-214, NGB-22, or other regular, reserve or guard component's official records will be allowed. The wearing of military service ribbons shall be limited to special events such as national holidays or ceremonies recognizing veterans of the Armed Forces. They may be worn in special events such as a military funeral. Military ribbons are not to be worn for regular duties, but may be worn throughout the duty day for the special calendar days or holidays/events described.
- D. A department member may purchase police service stripes to show years of professional service. These service stripes or "hash marks" may be worn on dress coats, exterior coats or long sleeve shirts. They are a gold cloth bar that is diagonally slanted. Each slanted gold cloth bar is to represent a full three (3) years of police/law enforcement service in a recognized organization. This may be a city, state, county, federal, correctional or legally recognized enforcement entity in which the officer served honorably. Each service stripe represents three years (completed). The wearer would need to complete the next grouping of three years to qualify for the next service stripe. These stripes begin 4 inches up from the end of the sleeve and extend upward toward the elbow matching the sleeve seam of the garment. These must be diagonal type hash mark angling up and away from the body on the left sleeve.
- E. Employees will be recognized based on tenure as followed;
 - 1. Employees will be issued a "serving since" attachment and name tag to be displayed on their uniform once they have reached five (5) years of full-time law enforcement service. The attachment will be either silver or gold depending on position and rank. This attachment will represent the year the employee started their full-time career. If an employee is promoted, the employee will receive a new name plate and attachment. In addition, a certificate will be issued after 5 years of service with the Portage Police Department.

2. A certificate and gift (determined by the awards committee and approved by the Chief of Police) will be awarded after 10 completed years with the Portage Police Department.

3. A plaque will be issued to employees reaching 20 years of service with the Portage Police Department.

4. A shadow box with a personalized badge or issued badge along with other memorabilia to commemorate the employee's service with the Portage Police Department will be issued at retirement.

F. Volunteers in Policing (VIPS) – will be recognized for their commitment in volunteering to serve the City of Portage and in assisting the Portage Police Department in the accomplishment of its mission. Tenure recognition will be issued in increments of 3, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 years of continued volunteer service.

VIII. CITIZEN AWARDS

A. The following awards are granted to civilians upon their attainment of the specific measurable standards set for the award and/or upon recommendation of the Awards Committee. Dependent on the type of commendation, recipients may receive a letter on department letterhead with a brief description of the action or service for which the award is issued and/or an award. Recipients of these awards will generally receive their awards at an annual awards recognition ceremony.

1. **Civilian Heroism Award** - Presented to a civilian for assistance in apprehending a criminal, or in extending oneself beyond one's own safety, to provide prompt action to aid people who are in danger, or in aiding the department in accomplishment of its mission.
2. **Good Samaritan** - Presented to a civilian for assistance in apprehending a criminal, providing prompt action to aid people who are in danger, and/ or in aiding the department in accomplishment of its mission.
3. **Police Chief's Award** – Presented by the Chief to citizens for their demonstrated citizenship, community service, accomplishments, support of the Police Department or other deserving act as determined by the Chief of Police. Any member of the department or citizen may recommend a person for this award.

IX. UNIFORM AWARD INSIGNIA

- A. A. Whenever a medal, ribbon, medallion or other insignia is presented as part of an award it must be worn in the manner prescribed by Policy & Procedure 2.04: Uniforms/Equipment. The wearing of any such item, however, is optional and at the discretion of the individual officer.

Award Ranking / Hierarchy for Placement on Uniform

- Medal of Honor
- Valor
- Distinguished Service
- Meritorious Service Award
- Life Saving
- Purple Heart
- Military Service
- K9
- SRO
- Instructor
- PTO
- ERT
- Negotiator
- CIT
- Years of Service

X. AWARDS COMMITTEE – QUARTERLY REVIEW

- A. The Awards Committee will meet on quarterly basis, as needed, and/or at the discretion of the Chief. Generally, meetings will take place in March, June, September and December.

XI. NON-DEPARTMENTAL RECOGNITION

- A. Nomination of department employees for non-departmental recognition is encouraged, but must be conducted in compliance with this Policy & Procedure. A copy of the award nomination must be submitted to the Chief for historical purposes only. In the event of an award being issued at a specific ceremony, a member from Administration may attend as a department representative.

XII. EMPLOYMENT FILE AND COMMENDATIONS

- A. Per 2021 WI Act 82, effective November 8th, 2021, all commendations shall be included in each department member's employment file. Also refer to Policy & Procedure 2.07: Performance Evaluations.

Keith Klafke
Chief of Police

This Policy & Procedure cancels and supersedes any and all previous written directives relative to the subject matter contained herein.

Initial 09/12/2024