

	GAITHERSBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT		
	Department Awards Program		
	GENERAL ORDER 206.1	Related CALEA Standards: 22.1.1, 22.2.8, 26.1.1, 26.1.2, 41.3.4	
Effective Date 06/03/2025			
Authorized by: Mark P. Sroka CHIEF OF POLICE		SIGNATURE	DATE 06/03/2025

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. It is the purpose of this directive to establish a formal awards program that recognizes and honors the exemplary service, dedication, and outstanding achievements of members of the police department. The program is designed to promote morale, reinforce department values, encourage professional excellence, and publicly acknowledge acts of heroism, leadership, community engagement, and exceptional performance.

2. POLICY

- 2.1. It is the policy of the Department to recognize and present awards or citations for acts of valor, outstanding performance, dedication to duty, and service by Department personnel. The Department may also recognize and present awards or citations to civilians who assist the Department.

3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1. **Normal Call of Duty:** Within the context of this directive, the term "Normal Call of Duty" refers to the routine tasks and responsibilities expected of an officer as part of their assigned duties. These actions follow department training and policies and may involve some risk, but do not go beyond what is typically required for the officer's role. Actions that fall within the ordinary call of duty are those reasonably anticipated in the daily performance of police work and do not involve exceptional courage, ingenuity, or risk beyond what is typically required to carry out job functions.
- 3.2. **Exceptional Personal Risk:** Within the context of this directive, the term "Exceptional Personal Risk" refers to a situation in which a police officer willingly faces serious and immediate danger that goes beyond the usual risks of their assigned duties. The danger must be significant, unavoidable, and clearly beyond what is normally expected in daily police work. This includes, but is not limited to, acts involving the imminent threat of serious injury or death, such as confronting an armed suspect, entering a hazardous environment (e.g., a burning structure or active shooter scene), or performing a life-saving act under perilous conditions.

4. THE AWARDS COMMITTEE

4.1. Committee's Purpose

- 4.1.1. The purpose of the Awards Committee is to review the facts and circumstances in which personnel may be eligible for an award.
- 4.1.2. As a result of the committee's review of actions cited in the nomination, recommendation(s) are made to the Chief of Police concerning the type of award(s) to be presented in consideration of acts of valor or any other outstanding performance or act.

4.2. Committee Composition

- 4.2.1. The Awards Committee is composed of the Chief of Police and the command staff.
- 4.2.2. The Chief of Police serves as the chairperson and will have final decision making authority on all award recommendations.

4.3. Submission and Review of Awards/Nominations

- 4.3.1. Any Department member or a civilian may bring any matter relating to an award nomination to the attention of the Chief of Police by submitting the name of the nominee and a detailed outline of the facts.
- 4.3.2. Department members are provided with award criteria in Section 5 of this directive, to outline what type of action constitutes nominations for specific awards.
- 4.3.3. If an act is recommended for a nomination, it must include:
 - 4.3.3.1. A complete description of the incident and actions taken by Department member(s).
 - 4.3.3.2. A complete listing of all personnel on scene and a description of their actions.
 - 4.3.3.3. Opinions of a medical professional(s) such as the attending physician or paramedic, if the Department member(s) actions contributed to saving a life in a medical-related situation.
 - 4.3.3.4. This nomination shall then be sent via the chain-of-command to the Chief of Police.
- 4.3.4. Shift supervisors who believe a civilian deserves recognition for

assisting the Department shall submit documentation via the chain of command to the Chief of Police detailing the circumstances.

- 4.3.5. The Department award review process, for both internal and external awards, will be assessed on an ongoing basis, to ensure that like actions are recognized.
- 4.3.6. The Awards Committee will review actions of all officers on the scene of incidents in all award decisions.
- 4.3.7. A Department member's actions may merit more than one award; however, only the highest-level award that meets the applicable criteria will be granted.
 - 4.3.7.1. The Police Purple Heart is exempt from the above provision. If a Department member's actions qualify for the Police Purple Heart in addition to another award, both may be granted, provided each award independently meets its respective criteria.

5. AWARDS PROCEDURES AND CRITERIA

5.1. Civilian Commendation – A commendation received from a civilian regarding a member of the Department is handled in the following manner:

- 5.1.1. The Chief of Police (or designee) sends correspondence to the civilian, acknowledging receipt of the commendation;
- 5.1.2. The commendation is presented to the recipient;
- 5.1.3. The commendation is entered into NeoGov and a copy is placed in the recipient's personnel file;
- 5.1.4. If the action meets the criteria for a higher class of award, the supervisor should nominate the recipient for a Department award and/or the City-wide Employee Recognition Award.

5.2. Department Commendation

- 5.2.1. A member may commend another member by submitting, via chain-of-command, a commendation for an action or suggestion beneficial to the Department and/or for continued excellence in the performance of duty.
- 5.2.2. This document is handled in the same manner as a commendation received by a civilian (Section 5.1).

5.3. Class "C" Commendation (Ribbon)

- 5.3.1. The Department's Class "C" Commendation may be awarded for outstanding performance beyond the realm of normal police work that did not involve personal risk.
- 5.3.2. The criteria for when this type of award may be appropriate includes:
 - 5.3.2.1. Outstanding service that went above the normal call of duty that reflects highly on the Department; and
 - 5.3.2.2. Did not involve exceptional personal risks to the nominated officer(s).
- 5.3.3. The recipient receives a ribbon (pin) for the duty uniform (uniform-of-the-day), a medal, an Award Citation for the officer's personnel file and any other consideration deemed suitable by the Chief of Police.
- 5.3.4. The wearing of the ribbon (pin) on the duty uniform is encouraged but may be worn at the member's discretion (See General Order 203.1).
- 5.3.5. The ribbon may be worn on the Department's Class A uniform.

5.4. Class "B" Commendation (Bronze Star)

- 5.4.1. The Department's Class "B" Commendation may be awarded for outstanding performance above the realm of normal call of duty that involved an exceptional personal risk.
- 5.4.2. Criteria for when this type of award may be appropriate includes:
 - 5.4.2.1. Outstanding service that went above the normal call of duty that reflects highly on the Department as a whole; and
 - 5.4.2.2. Involved exceptional personal risk to the nominated officer(s).
- 5.4.3. The recipient receives a ribbon (pin) for the duty uniform, a medal, an award citation for the recipient's personnel file and other consideration deemed suitable by the Chief of Police.

- 5.4.4. The presentation of this award and its wearing on the uniform is the same as the Class “C” Commendation.

5.5. Class "A" Commendation (Silver Star)

- 5.5.1. The Class “A” Commendation may be awarded for outstanding actions well above the realm of normal call of duty that involved exceptional bravery, ingenuity, or decisive actions during a life-threatening situation.
- 5.5.2. Criteria for when this type of award may be appropriate includes:
 - 5.5.2.1. Outstanding actions that demonstrate exceptional bravery, ingenuity, or decisive action during a life-threatening situation;
 - 5.5.2.2. The officer’s actions went well above the normal call of duty; and
 - 5.5.2.3. The officer knowingly placed themselves in substantial and immediate peril.
- 5.5.3. The recipient receives a ribbon for the duty uniform, a medal, an award citation, and any other consideration deemed suitable by the Chief of Police.
- 5.5.4. The presentation of this award and its wearing on the uniform is the same as the Class “C” and Class “B” Commendation.

5.6. The Medal of Valor (Gold Star)

- 5.6.1. The Department's Medal of Valor may be awarded for self-sacrificing actions well above and beyond the normal call of duty involving the officer knowingly placing themselves in grave danger during an imminent life-threatening situation, often involving the preservation of life or the prevention of serious injury under extreme conditions.
- 5.6.2. Criteria for when this type of award may be appropriate includes:
 - 5.6.2.1. Self-sacrificing actions well above and beyond the call of duty;
 - 5.6.2.2. The officer knowingly placed themselves in grave danger during an imminent life-

threatening situation, taking action that clearly exceeds the expectations of their assignment, training, or rank, to protect others or preserve life; and

5.6.2.3. The act involved the preservation of life or the prevention of serious injury under extreme conditions.

5.6.3. The recipient receives a ribbon for the duty uniform, a medal, an award citation for the recipient's personnel file and any other consideration deemed suitable by the Chief of Police.

5.6.4. The presentation of this award and its wearing on the uniform is the same as the Class "C," Class "B," and Class "A" Commendation.

5.6.5. This award also applies to personnel killed in the line-of-duty.

5.7. Police Purple Heart

5.7.1. The Police Purple Heart may be awarded to a member who is seriously injured or killed in the line of duty as a direct result of hostile or criminal action.

5.7.2. The recipient receives a ribbon for the duty uniform, a medal, an award citation for the recipient's personnel file and any other consideration deemed suitable by the Chief of Police.

5.7.3. The presentation of this award and its wearing on the uniform is the same as the Class "C," Class "B," and Class "A" Commendations as well as the Medal of Valor.

5.7.4. In instances involving a line of duty death, next of kin will be presented this award.

5.8. Life-Saving Award

5.8.1. The Life Saving award is authorized in instances where one or more Department members take remarkable action that results in the saving of a human life and includes an opinion of a medical professional(s) such as the attending physician or a paramedic in a medical-related situation.

5.8.2. The recipient of a Life-Saving award will receive a medal,

ribbon, and certificate bearing the signature of the Chief of Police.

- 5.8.3. The presentation of this award and its wearing on the uniform is the same as the Class “C,” Class “B,” and Class “A” Commendations as well as the Medal of Valor and the Police Purple Heart.

5.9. Officer of the Month

- 5.9.1. Any Department member may nominate any other sworn member of the Department for Officer of the Month. Nominations will consider the following:

- 5.9.1.1. A specific act on the part of the nominee that clearly went above and beyond routine duties;

- 5.9.1.2. The use of investigative or other skills that led to a significant arrest which may or may not have involved the recovery of a significant amount of stolen property;

- 5.9.1.3. The provision of consistently high quality work; or

- 5.9.1.4. Any other noteworthy accomplishment that demonstrates his or her commitment to quality service and/or reflects favorably on the Department.

- 5.9.3. The recipient will receive his or her name, photograph, and a detailed description of his or her accomplishments, displayed within the officer of the month plaque in the police facility.

5.10. Officer of the Year

- 5.10.1. Any Department member, with exception of members of the command staff, may submit a nomination for the Officer of the Year. Nominations may be submitted for any sworn member of the Department and will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- 5.10.1.1. A specific act on the part of the officer that clearly went above and beyond routine duties;

- 5.10.1.2. Any other noteworthy accomplishment that demonstrates their commitment to the welfare of Department members or any other department group or member; or
- 5.10.1.3. An exceptionally high quality or quantity of work performed during a sustained period, clearly and significantly exceeding the requirements of a position.
- 5.10.2. The recipient will receive a ribbon, an award recognition plaque, and a certificate bearing the signature of the Chief of Police along with the recipient's name and the year the award was received.

5.11. Supervisor of the Year

- 5.11.1. Any Department member may submit a nomination for any sworn corporal or sergeant of the Department for Supervisor of the Year. Nominations may be submitted for any sworn member of the Department and will be evaluated based on the following criteria:
 - 5.11.1.1. A specific act on the part of the supervisor that clearly went above and beyond routine duties;
 - 5.11.1.2. Any other noteworthy accomplishment that demonstrates his or her commitment to the welfare of Department members or any other Department group or member; or
 - 5.11.1.3. An exceptionally high quality or quantity of work performed during a sustained period, clearly and significantly exceeding the requirements of his or her supervisory position.
- 5.11.2. The recipient will receive a ribbon, an award recognition plaque, and a certificate bearing the signature of the Chief of Police along with the recipient's name and the year the award was received.

5.12 Professional Staff Member of the Year

- 5.12.1. Any Department member, with exception of members of the command staff, may submit a nomination for any full-

time or part-time professional staff member of the Department, to include supervisory and non-supervisory positions, for the Professional Staff Member of the Year. Nominations may be submitted for any sworn member of the Department and will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- 5.12.1.1. A specific act on the part of the professional staff member that clearly went above and beyond routine duties;
 - 5.12.1.2. Any other noteworthy accomplishment that demonstrates their commitment to the welfare of department members or any other department group or member; or
 - 5.12.1.3. An exceptionally high quality or quantity of work performed during a sustained period, clearly and significantly exceeding the requirements of a position.
- 5.12.2. The recipient will receive a certificate bearing the signature of the Chief of Police along with the recipient's name and the year the award was received.

5.13. Leadership Award

- 5.13.1. Any Department member may submit a nomination for any sworn member of the Department for the Leadership Award. Nominations may be submitted for any sworn member of the Department and will be evaluated based on the following criteria:
- 5.13.1.1. Sustained level of professional conduct and work ethic that consistently exceeds expectations of an officer over a period of time;
 - 5.13.1.2. Demonstrates a consistently positive attitude and workplace culture, fosters teamwork, and shows unwavering dedication to the Department's mission;

5.13.1.3. Exhibits a level of performance that consistently exhibits outstanding commitment beyond their routine responsibilities;

5.13.1.4. Serves as a role model through their reliability, initiative, and commitment to public service; or

5.13.1.5. Their actions support operational effectiveness and enhance community trust and departmental morale.

5.13.2. The recipients of a Leadership Award will receive a ribbon and a certificate bearing the signature of the Chief of Police along with the recipient's name and the year the award was received.

5.13.3. The presentation of this award and its wearing on the uniform is the same as the Class "C," Class "B," and Class "A" Commendations as well as the Medal of Valor and the Police Purple Heart.

5.14. Unit Citation

5.14.1. Authorized in instances where an entire unit, section or shift has demonstrated superior performance during a calendar year that is clearly deemed exceptional and worthy of recognition.

5.14.2. The recipients of a Unit Citation will receive a ribbon and a certificate bearing the signature of the Chief of Police along with the recipient's name and the year the award was received.

5.15. Chief's Award

5.15.1. The Chief's Award may be awarded to any member of the Gaithersburg Police Department, a member of an allied agency, a civilian, or other City employee.

5.15.2. Any Department member may nominate any other member of the Gaithersburg Police Department, a member of an allied agency, a civilian, or other City employee for the Chief's Award. Nominations will be considered for the following:

5.15.2.1. An outstanding accomplishment which has

resulted in improved administration, improved operations, or substantial savings in manpower or operational costs;

5.15.2.2. Where the recipient has gone above and beyond the requirements of his or her normal assignment to contribute to a more effective and efficient police service;

5.15.2.3. For outstanding work which has brought a great credit to the Department in a case of unusual public interest; or

5.15.2.4. Where valuable or courageous assistance is provided to the agency by a member of an allied agency, by a civilian, or other City employee, contributing to the accomplishments of the Department's mission or the safety of the community.

5.15.5. All recipients of the Chief's Award will receive a certificate bearing the signature of the Chief of Police along with the recipient's name and the year the award was received.

5.16. Commander's Award

5.16.1. Authorized in instances of sustained exceptional performance by an employee during a calendar year – performance could include community service, community policing, identified enforcement activities, initiatives, or collateral duties in furtherance of the mission of the Department.

5.16.2. The employee must be nominated for the award by a bureau commander.

5.16.3. If a nomination is made by a bureau commander it will be submitted to the Awards Committee.

5.16.4. The award recipient will receive certificate bearing the signature of the respective bureau commander along with the recipient's name and the year the award was received.

5.17. Safe Driving Award

5.17.1. Eligibility for the Safe Driving Award include:

5.17.1.1. All sworn personnel below the rank of

Lieutenant who drive a City vehicle as part of their primary job duties are eligible for the Safe Driving Award. The intent of the award is to recognize officers for safe driving habits.

- 5.17.1.2. Sworn personnel who complete a calendar year with no at fault/preventable collisions, traffic citations, payable speed camera/red light citations, and no sustained driving complaints while driving a City vehicle are eligible to receive one day of Administrative Leave to be used by the end of the calendar year.

5.17.2 Nomination Process

- 5.17.2.1. The Police Training and Emergency Operations Coordinator will provide the Chief of Police with the names of all qualifying officers at the beginning of each calendar year.
- 5.17.2.2. The Chief of Police will recommend to the City Manager award recipients based on the above criteria.

6. **EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AWARDS PROGRAM**

6.1. **Eligibility Criteria**

- 6.1.1. Department members are eligible for nomination in the City-wide Employee Recognition Awards Program. The intent of the program is to recognize individuals or teams of employees for outstanding performance, achievements, or contributions to the City.
- 6.1.2. Any full-time or employment agreement employees (e.g., part-time, volunteer, intern) can be nominated by any other full-time or employment agreement employee. Nomination criteria include:
 - 6.1.2.1. Sustained an exceptionally high level of productivity and quality of work;
 - 6.1.2.2. Performed work clearly above and beyond what is normally expected on the day-to-day job;

- 6.1.2.3. Produced a work product of exceptionally high quality under tight deadlines;
- 6.1.2.4. Consistently performed extra duties beyond those normally assigned;
- 6.1.2.5. Volunteered for and completed extra or emergency assignments while maintaining own workload;
- 6.1.2.6. Provided exceptional customer service (to external and/or internal customers);
- 6.1.2.7. Demonstrated and maintained excellent working relationships with coworkers and customers;
- 6.1.2.8. Willingly and cheerfully cooperated with and assisted others whenever needed or requested;
- 6.1.2.9. Displayed exceptional dedication, conscientiousness, dependability and/or reliability;
- 6.1.2.10. Used personal initiative and creativity to solve a problem;
- 6.1.2.11. Suggested and developed an idea or program that saved time or money;
- 6.1.2.12. Made outstanding contributions that enhanced the quality and morale of the workplace;
- 6.1.2.13. Made outstanding contributions that created an exceptional public image of the City;
- 6.1.2.14. Demonstrated outstanding judgment or courage in an emergency situation;
- 6.1.2.15. Exhibited meritorious action to prevent injury, loss of life or damage to/loss of property; and
- 6.1.2.16. Other one-time noteworthy achievement that merits recognition.

- 6.1.3. The employee or team must display a consistently high quality of teamwork and an attitude that promotes a good work environment.

6.2. Nomination

- 6.2.1. To nominate an employee, a nomination form may be obtained from the Department's representative on the Employee Recognition Awards Committee or electronically on the Employee Intranet.
- 6.2.2. The completed form is submitted to an Employee Recognition Awards Committee representative via interoffice mail or e-mail.

6.3. Committee Selections

- 6.3.1. The Employee Recognition Awards Committee selects the award recipients on a quarterly basis and the awards are presented at a City Council meeting.
- 6.3.1.1. First Quarter- January through March;
- 6.3.1.2. Second Quarter- April through June;
- 6.3.1.3. Third Quarter- July through September; and
- 6.3.1.4. Fourth Quarter- October through December.
- 6.3.2. The Employee of the Year and the Team of the Year are selected by the ERC from all award winners throughout the year. These awards are presented at a designated City event.

7. COMMENDATION CATEGORY MATRIX FOR CLASS C-A AND MEDAL OF VALOR

Criteria	Class C	Class B	Class A	Medal of Valor
Outstanding Service	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Above Normal Call of Duty (COD)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Exceptional Personal Risk	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Well Above Normal COD	No	No	Yes	Yes
Exceptional Bravery, Ingenuity, Decisive Action During Life Threatening Situation	No	No	Yes	Yes

Knowingly Placed Themselves in Substantial & Immediate Peril	No	No	Yes	Yes
Self-Sacrificing Actions During Immediate Life-Threatening Situation	No	No	No	Yes