

Commendations and Medal Awards

1015.1 POLICY

Agency Content

The purpose of this policy is to describe the program of awards and commendations within the Syracuse Police Department. It is the policy of the Syracuse Police Department to recognize and commend those members who distinguish themselves by meritorious service or heroic acts.

1015.2 DEFINITIONS

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Commendation – To mention with approbation: praise.

1015.3 GENERAL PROVISIONS

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Commendations may be awarded at any time for outstanding service to the public.

The Department may award a commendation to a person who is not an employee of the department for an outstanding act.

Annually, the Department will award medals at a public ceremony.

The Chief of Police must approve and sign all Departmental Commendations.

The Chief of Police or his designee must approve and a Deputy Chief of Police will sign all Bureau Commendations.

The Chief of Police or his designee must approve and a Division Commander will sign all Divisional Commendations.

1015.4 COMMENDATION TYPES AND CRITERIA

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Departmental Commendation - The Chief of Police may grant commendation to any employee of the Department, with bonus time commensurate with the specific activity such as:

- (a) Acts of outstanding bravery or heroism where the member has demonstrated characteristics of personal courage and devotion to duty.
- (b) Accomplishments resulting in improved administration, operation of the Department in general, or which result in substantial savings in manpower or Departmental operating costs.
- (c) Outstanding police work bringing credit to the Department in connection with unusual public interest.

Bureau Commendation – With the approval of the Chief of Police or designee, a Deputy Chief of Police may acknowledge achievements of employees who bring credit to the Department or for acts that involve performance above that which is required by the employee's normal assignment.

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Divisional Commendation - With the approval of the Chief of Police or designee, a Division Commander may acknowledge the work of employees that is noteworthy, but not appropriate for a Bureau or Departmental commendation and prepare a divisional commendation.

Unit Commendation – May be awarded by the Chief of Police to a designated group of sworn members whose performance on a particular incident or a particular assignment went above and beyond the Department's expectations.

Civilian Commendation - The Chief of Police may present a commendation to a citizen for a police related action that he feels deserves recognition in performance of a service to the community.

1015.5 PROCEDURE FOR RECOMMENDING COMMENDATIONS

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Any member of the Department or the public may call attention to commendable police or civilian action and recommend another, or themselves, for a commendation by following the procedures detailed in this section.

- (a) The Chief of Police, or designee, shall make available to the public the procedures for commending the Department or its employees. This shall be accomplished through the use of the Department's website and information disseminated by the Department.

Members who wish to recommend a commendation be issued must submit a written commendation request form surrounding the actions during the incident, including dates, times, case numbers, names of witnesses, nature of the incident, and reasons for commendable behavior and recommendation.

Commendation requests will be reviewed and voted on monthly by a Commendation Committee. The Commendation Committee will be comprised of a collection of representatives from various assignments throughout the department, as well as a Syracuse PBA representative, that are approved by the Chief of Police.

- (a) All denied commendation recommendation forms will be filed in the recommended officer's Human Resources file. Approved commendations will be filed in the receiving officer's Human Resources file.
- (b) The commendation committee will notify the requesting department member if a request is denied.
- (c) For all approved commendations, the Commendation Committee will determine the appropriate type of commendation, prepare the written commendation and present it to the appropriate Commander, Deputy Chief or Chief of Police for signature and issuance.

1015.6 PRESENTATION OF COMMENDATIONS

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Original copies of commendations shall be presented to the cited officers in a manner commensurate with the value and importance of the recognized activity.

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Presentations may be made by the Chief of Police, Bureau Deputy Chief, or the Division Commander in private, at roll call, or at ceremonies designed for such presentations.

1015.7 COMMENDATION REPORT DISTRIBUTION AND RECORDS

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The Human Resources Division shall maintain records of recommending reports and commendation letters of Department members.

Distribution of letters and reports concerned with commendations shall be as follows:

- (a) The original commendation letter shall be presented to the commended member.
- (b) One copy of the commendation letter and a copy of the recommending report shall be filed in the personnel file of the commended officer.
- (c) One copy of the commendation letter shall be forwarded to the Public Information Officer of the Syracuse Police Department where it will be reviewed for publicity when appropriate.

The Commendation Committee shall maintain a complete list of all commendations issued to be reviewed annually for consideration for medal issuance.

1015.8 DEPARTMENTAL MEDAL AWARDS

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Once each year, the Commendation Committee shall review the commendation letter file, and other available records and information, for the purpose of recommending members to be considered for medal awards. The Committee may schedule additional meetings in excess of meeting monthly to complete the medal recipient selection process.

Medal awards will be made at annual ceremonies, at a time and place designated by the Chief of Police.

1015.9 MEDAL AWARD TYPES AND CRITERIA

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The history and tradition of medal awards bestowed upon members of the Syracuse Police Department is the amalgamation of Departmental and Police Benevolent Association. The following are the types of medal awards and criteria.

- (a) DEPARTMENTAL MEDAL AWARDS
 1. **Francis Hendricks Medal for Bravery** – May be awarded by the Chief of Police to a sworn member of the Department who performs an act of personal bravery, characterized by resolute fearlessness, fortitude, endurance and self-sacrifice above and beyond the call of duty. The act or acts of heroism must have been so notable as to involve risk of life and so extraordinary as to set the individual apart from his or her fellow officers. This award is the highest Departmental award that can be bestowed upon a member of the Department.

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2. **Prestigious Service Medal (formerly Herald Award)** – May be awarded by the Chief of Police to a sworn member or the department who has distinguished themselves by consistent and outstanding prestigious service or achievement to the department. The performance must be steadfast and consistently above and beyond the call of duty as to merit recognition for service, which is so exceptionally outstanding as to have set the individual apart from fellow officers and greatly benefited the community.
3. **Distinguished Service Medal** - May be awarded by the Chief of Police to a sworn member of the Department who performs an act of heroism in the face of personal injury and risk of life; outstanding gallantry, conspicuous action, reacting in a manner as to bring great credit upon themselves and/or the community. The required performance, while of a lesser degree than that required for the Hendricks or Slater medals, must nevertheless have been performed with marked distinction.
4. **Meritorious Service Medal** – May be awarded by the Chief of Police to a sworn member of the Department who deserves recognition for an extremely laudable or extraordinary act. Some examples would be the arrest of a person who is a serious threat to the community, the skillful work that leads to the arrest of a criminal(s), tremendous effort of evidence personnel, the unsung hero, the detective who steadfastly follows his leads, etc.
5. **John C. Dillon Medal** – May be awarded by the Chief of Police to a sworn member of the Department who distinguishes themselves by meritorious service or achievement to the Department. The performance must be above and beyond the call of duty and such as to merit recognition for service, which is so exceptionally outstanding as to have set the individual apart from fellow officers.
6. **Wallie Howard Jr. Medal** – May be awarded by the Chief of Police to a sworn member of the Department who has performed and displayed bravery in the face of great risk to personal safety, extraordinary effort, intelligence, or excellence in the field of narcotics enforcement.
7. **Mayor's Achievement Medal** – May be awarded and presented by the Mayor of the City of Syracuse to a sworn member who had a positive bearing on the outcome of an incident or incidents. The actions deserve recognition for performance of a particularly noteworthy act based on determined and intelligent performance relating to the Syracuse Police Department. The commendation committee will select multiple candidates for the Mayor to select one or more recipients from.
8. **Chief's Achievement Medal** – Upon the recommendation of the Chief of Police, may be awarded and presented by the Chief of Police to a sworn member of the Department who had a positive bearing on the outcome of an incident or incidents. The officer's actions deserve recognition based on noteworthy, determined and intelligent performance marked with distinction as relates to the Syracuse Police Department. The commendation committee will select multiple candidates for the Chief to select one or more recipients from.

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9. **Captain Richard Walsh Medal (Detective of the Year)** – May be awarded by the Chief of Police to a detective. The detective should consistently demonstrate above average intelligence, effort, and investigative skills. Their performance must have made a significant impact in an investigation, which may have resulted from a single incident or accumulative investigative work.
 10. **Captain Timothy “Modee” Laun Medal** – May be awarded by the Chief of Police to a supervisor or commander who has demonstrated exemplary leadership capabilities. The performance must be beyond on the normal scope of duty. The supervisor should always demonstrate poise and effectiveness in any situation, and complete tasks exceptionally. The supervisor should be considered an integral member of the team thereby increasing the successfulness of their performance.
 11. **Officer of the Year Award** - May be awarded by the Chief of Police to a patrol officer(s) from each individual watch. The officer(s) may be recognized for their exceptional performance i.e. calls taken, reports, arrests, etc.; and/or their leadership.
 12. **Life Saver Award** - May be awarded by the Chief of Police to a sworn member of the department that through their intervention a life was saved. They must have intervened in some manner which directly resulted in the preservation of life.
 13. **Civilian Employee of the Year Award** - May be awarded by the Chief of Police to a non-sworn member of the department that has consistently performed above and beyond their normal duties. They regularly demonstrate both team-oriented and leadership capabilities. They must complete their tasks exceptionally and make substantial contributions to their department’s goals.
- (b) **POLICE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION AWARDS**
1. **Jerome Slater Medal for Bravery** – Awarded upon the recommendation of the PBA and presented by the PBA President to an officer who performs an act of personal bravery, characterized by resolute fearlessness, fortitude, endurance and self sacrifice above and beyond the call of duty. The act or acts of heroism must have been so notable as to involve risk of life and so extraordinary as to set the individual apart from his or her fellow officers. This award is the highest Police Benevolent Association award that can be bestowed upon a member of the Department.
 2. **P.B.A President’s Medal** – Upon the recommendation of the PBA, may be awarded by the PBA President to an officer who, without regard to personal welfare, had a positive bearing on the outcome of an incident or incidents. The officer’s actions deserve recognition, based on noteworthy, determined and intelligent performance marked with distinction as relates to the Syracuse Police Department.
 3. **P.B.A Valor and Merit Medal** – Upon the recommendation of the PBA, may be awarded by the PBA President to officers who distinguish themselves by an act of heroism and/or meritorious achievement. The required standards, while

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of a lesser degree than required for the Slater or P.B.A. Presidents award, must nevertheless be characterized with marked distinction.

1015.10 WEARING COMMENDATIONS AND MEDALS

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The appropriate wearing of commendations and medal(s) is specified in the Uniforms and Civilian Attire policy.

- (a) Commendation breast bars denoting the commendation award will be worn when wearing the Class "A" Uniform, or Ceremonial Unit Class "A" Uniform.
- (b) Medallions will not be worn. Only breast bars denoting the medal award will be worn when wearing the Class "A" Uniform, or Ceremonial Unit Class "A" Uniform.
- (c) Only those persons who are the official recipients of commendations and medals are authorized to wear the associated breast bars.

1015.11 OFFICER / CIVILIAN OF THE MONTH

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The supervisors and command staff of each patrol watch shall select an officer(s) to designate as officer of the month each month.

- (a) Recipients should exhibit diligence, reliability, steadfast dependability and everyday effort.

The Chief of Police or his designee shall select a civilian employee of the month each month.

- (a) Recipients must be an employee in good standing, not within their probationary period at the time of nomination. Recipients should be proactive, take initiative, consistently deliver high quality work, possess leadership qualities and have a positive attitude towards their assignment and work.

The names of those selected as Officer/Civilian of the month should be immediately forwarded to the appropriate Deputy Chief and PIO so they can be appropriately recognized.