

# Awards and Commendations

**Index Code: 203**

**Effective Date: 03/01/08 (Revised 11/23/16)**

---

## **I. Purpose**

The Office of the Sheriff for Queen Anne's County expects a high level of professionalism from its employees. When employees exceed the minimum standards of the Office it is appropriate for them to be commended. The official commendation of such performance, and the arrangement of appropriate publicity, is provided by the Office of the Sheriff to give full public recognition to those who have brought honor to themselves, the Office, and Queen Anne's County.

The purpose of this directive is to establish the types of awards and commendations that will be awarded, those who are eligible for each award, and the mechanism for the selection of members who may have obtained such recognition.

## **II. Policy**

It is the policy of the Office of the Sheriff to identify those members of the Office who have exceeded standard levels of performance in specific areas of their duties, and provide appropriate recognition in the form of awards and commendations. In addition, allied agency personnel may also be recognized through a Sheriff's Commendation.

## **III. Awards Committee**

The awards committee will consist of five (5) members from the Office of the Sheriff. Four (4) committee members are appointed by the Undersheriff or his designee and identified to all personnel upon selection. This is completed once nominations are received from agency personnel. The selected positions will include four Deputies/DFC's.

One member of the board will be appointed Awards Committee Chairperson by a majority vote of other board members. This shall be accomplished at the first official meeting of a new board. Each board member will serve at the discretion of the Undersheriff or his

designee.

The additional member of the Awards Committee includes the Sheriff's Administrative Assistant, who will maintain a permanent position on the board. The Sheriff's Administrative Assistant will maintain minutes of each meeting, as well as order the appropriate plaques and print all certificates for the nominees. The Quartermaster is responsible for ordering appropriate uniform pins and medals for the nominees as requested by the Sheriff's Administrative Assistant or the Committee Chairperson.

The Awards Committee will meet periodically as directed by the Committee Chairperson to consider all recommendations throughout the year (At least three times per year). The Awards Committee is given access to all information regarding each nominee recommended, and may investigate the circumstances surrounding the recommendation in any manner it deems necessary to verify information. The Awards Committee forwards all recommendations and the results of their investigations to the Sheriff by way of the Undersheriff or his designee through interoffice correspondence.

## **IV. Nominating Procedures for Awards and Commendations**

It is the responsibility of each Sergeant and all Division Commanders to nominate members of their respective units for appropriate awards. However, all members of the Office of the Sheriff, regardless of rank, are encouraged to recognize outstanding performance of sworn personnel, civilian personnel, allied agency personnel, and business/community leaders.

**V. Awards Nomination Form** Nominations must be submitted in writing to the Sheriff's Administrative Assistant or the Chairperson by utilizing the appropriate Nomination Form, which shall be maintained in electronic format. Once the form is completed and submitted, containing all appropriate information, the Sheriff's Administrative Assistant shall maintain the form in an accessible file. The nominations can be submitted throughout the calendar year in question; however, will not be considered after January 10<sup>th</sup> of the following year as the Awards Banquet will be held in February or March of each year (If no schedule conflicts arise). The awards Committee Chairperson will retain all submissions received for consideration for a minimum of three years.

**VI. Award Nomination Selections**

The Chairperson will convene the Awards Committee at least three times per year to consider nominations and to prepare for the awards banquet. Award nominations will be reviewed by the Awards Committee Board no later than January following the calendar year in question. The winning nominees will be determined by a majority vote from the board members for each selected award. Upon completion of the nominations for the calendar year, recommendations will be forwarded to the Undersheriff or his designee through written interoffice correspondence. The recommendations will be submitted along with a copy of the original recommendations and any supporting documentation.

If an Awards Committee Board Member is nominated by another deputy, the affected board member shall excuse himself/herself from the board meeting and the vote for that particular award nomination. The board member can return to the meeting once the vote has taken place. This is done to maintain a fair and impartial voting process. A board member is not permitted to vote themselves in for an award. A submission for a board member must be submitted by another board member or other member of the Office of the Sheriff not affected by the nomination. A majority vote shall prevail to award the nomination for a particular award.

**VII. Written Notification of Award Nominees**

Once nominees have been selected the Awards Committee nominations will be forwarded to the Undersheriff or his designee by

way of written interoffice correspondence, and include a complete list of each award recipient. The nominations will then be forwarded to the Sheriff. All nominations submitted will be accompanied by the original recommendation and any supporting documentation. Once a final selection of award nominees has been made, the Sheriff's Administrative Assistant shall immediately mail written notifications to all award recipients acknowledging their selection of an award and to request their attendance at the annual awards banquet. The written correspondence shall not reveal what type of an award will be given just that the selected deputy shall receive an award.

**VIII. Maintenance of Records by the Administrative Assistant**

Once the award nominee selections are final, the Sheriff's Administrative Assistant will maintain a permanent file of the nominations approved by the Awards Committee and the Sheriff. Additionally, copies shall be maintained in the nominees' personnel files. The PIO will assist the Sheriff's Administrative Assistant in developing and/or creating a power point presentation for the yearly awards banquet.

**IX. Awards Banquet**

All Awards and Commendations will be presented during an annual Awards Banquet Ceremony in February or March of the calendar year following the nominations. The date, time, and location of the Awards Ceremony will depend on facility availability, but will occur no later than the end of March each calendar year.

The Awards Committee will be responsible for planning and making all the necessary arrangements for the Annual Awards Ceremony. This shall be accomplished financially through donations and Office of the Sheriff funds allotted within budget.

**X. Awards Order of Precedent**

The following awards and uniform pins are to be worn on the uniform in order of precedence. The order in this policy will show from the highest award to the lowest award in succession. It is noted that this policy will also show what each award recipient shall receive at the annual awards banquet for each award.

1. Medal of Honor Award (Medal, Pin

- & Certificate)
- 2. DFC Jason Schwenz Award (Medal, Pin & Certificate)
- 3. Legion of Honor Award (Plaque, Pin & Certificate)
- 4. Purple Heart Award (Medal, Pin & Certificate)
- 5. Lifesaving Award (Plaque, Pin & Certificate)
- 6. Sheriff's Commendation Award (Plaque, Pin & Certificate)
- 7. Meritorious Unit Citation Award (Pin & Certificate)
- 8. Outstanding Patrol Performance Award (Pin & Certificate)
- 9. Narcotics Enforcement Award (Pin & Certificate)
- 10. DUI Enforcement Award (Pin & Certificate)
- 11. K9 Commendation Award (Pin & Certificate)
- 12. The Patriot Award (Pin Only / One Time Award)
- 13. Distinguished Volunteer Service Award (Plaque & Certificate)
- 14. Honor Graduate Award (Pin & Certificate)
- 15. Years of Service Award (Pin & Certificate)
- 16. Civilian Service Employees Award (Plaque, Pin & Certificate)
- 17. Exceptional Driving Skills Award (Certificate Only)
- 18. Business Owners Service Award (Plaque & Certificate)

**XI. Order of Wear on the Uniform**

All ribbons shall be worn on the uniform on the right side above the name plate. All ribbons shall be worn from top to bottom in order of precedent

(Highest to Lowest). All previously issued ribbons for Office of the Sheriff personnel that have been re-issued under this policy may exchange their older ribbons for new one's pertaining to the appropriate award. Awards issued to deputies from outside agencies may only be worn at the discretion of the Sheriff.

**XII. Awards Prerequisites**

**A. Medal of Honor Award**

The Medal of Honor is awarded to deputies who distinguish themselves through extraordinary bravery, heroism, and selflessness. The deputy must have been aware of the imminent threat to their own personal safety and have acted "Above and Beyond the Call of Duty," at the risk of their own personal safety and/or their life. The nominee receives a medal, pin, and certificate.



**NOTE: The nominee for this award shall be considered for entry into the Maryland Sheriff's Association Deputy of the Year Award, which takes place at the annual Maryland Sheriff's Association Banquet.**

**B. DFC Jason Schwenz Award**

The DFC Jason Schwenz Award is presented yearly to members of the Office of the Sheriff who have made extraordinary contributions to Law Enforcement throughout their career, and who exemplify the character and dedication of DFC Jason Schwenz by consistently performing above and beyond their required duties. This shall be considered one of the most prestigious awards given to a deputy in the Office of the Sheriff due to the ultimate sacrifice given by DFC Jason Schwenz. The nominee receives a medal, pin and certificate.

**NOTE: This award was combined with the former "Deputy of the Year Award" from previous policy. At the annual awards banquet, a member of the immediate family of DFC Jason Schwenz shall present this award to the nominated deputy if available.**

**C. Legion of Honor Award**

The Legion of Honor is awarded to deputies that have affected the arrest or assisted in the capture/arrest of a person who was a major

threat and/or risk to the community. The nominee receives a plaque, pin and certificate.



**D. Purple Heart Award**

The Purple Heart shall be awarded to deputies who are injured while serving in an official capacity as a Law Enforcement Officer. The injury sustained must have been as a result of a life threatening situation, or a permanent injury received as a result of any official action or self-sacrifice, and not by carelessness on the part of the deputy. The nominee receives a medal, pin, and certificate.



**E. Lifesaving Award**

The Lifesaving Award is presented to deputies for saving human life, whereas, if not for the direct action of the deputy, in all probability the life would not have been saved. Documentation and other supportive evidence, such as statements from physicians, witnesses, and/or other deputies should be included with the original recommendation. If a deputy's action led to the prolonging of life to the extent that the victim was released to the care of medical authorities, he/she is also eligible to receive this award even through the victim may expire at a later time. The nominee receives a plaque, pin, and certificate.



**NOTE: The nominee for this award shall be considered for entry into the Maryland Sheriff's Association Deputy of the Year Award, which takes place at the annual Maryland Sheriff's Association Banquet.**

**F. Sheriff's Commendation Award**

The Sheriff's Commendation Award is awarded to any member or unit of the Office of the Sheriff, or allied agency personnel, for an outstanding accomplishment that resulted in improved administration, operations, or substantial savings in manpower or operational costs, where the recipient or recipients have gone above and beyond the requirement of his/her normal assignment to contribute to a more effective and efficient law enforcement service, or for outstanding performance that

brought great credit to the Office of the Sheriff and or Queen Anne's County in a case of unusual public interest.

This award is solely decided upon and selected by the Sheriff and not by the Awards Committee. However, the Awards Committee may submit nominations to the Sheriff for consideration. The nominee receives a plaque, pin, and certificate. If an allied agency member is nominated to receive this award, the nominated member shall receive a plaque and certificate only, not a uniform pin.



**G. Meritorious Unit Citation Award**

The Meritorious Unit Citation is given to only one (1) unit per year within the Office of the Sheriff, which has gone above and beyond the call of duty in the performance of their law enforcement responsibilities. For purposes of this award a unit is defined as any division, unit, group, or team that works together to accomplish a common goal. The unit selected for this prestigious award should have displayed exemplary performance throughout the calendar year. All units within the Office of the Sheriff are eligible for this award to include: Administrative Services, Field Operations, Support Services, Sheriff's Resource Unit, School Resource Officers, Criminal Investigations, Drug Task Force, K9, Circuit Court Security, the S.W.A.T. Team, and the Civilian Clerical Staff. The nominees receive a pin and certificate.



**H. Outstanding Patrol Performance Award**

The Outstanding Patrol Performance Award is presented to one (1) patrol squad from the Field Operations Division which has made outstanding contributions toward keeping the communities safe through criminal and/or traffic enforcement, by performing an exceptional amount and/or quality of law enforcement activity, developing and implementing effective operational strategies or tactics, or consistently conducting skillful or persevering investigation of an arduous or complex task. As additional criteria for this award, the Awards Committee shall take into consideration yearly statistical performance when comparing all patrol squads for the entire calendar year in their law enforcement

responsibilities. Each member of the nominated squad receives a pin and certificate.



**I. Narcotics Enforcement Award**

The Narcotics Enforcement Award is given to up to two (2) deputies with the highest statistical performance in Narcotic investigations leading to the arrest of persons for violations of

the Controlled Dangerous Substance laws. Statistical performance includes on view arrests and charging documents issued, which need not be served to get credit for the arrest. **Deputies assigned to the Queen Anne's County Drug Task Force are excluded from consideration for this award.** The nominee receives a pin and certificate.

The deputy with the top statistical performance for this award throughout the Office of the Sheriff will additionally be awarded the opportunity to attend aggressive Narcotic Enforcement Training (when available) to include but not limited to: The "Top Gun" Undercover Narcotics Investigator School given at Ft. Indiantown Gap Military Training Base in Pennsylvania, and/or attend the MAGLOCLEN annual Narcotics Conference in Ocean City, Maryland. The Awards Committee board members will forward the nominated deputy selection to the training coordinator who shall be responsible for registering the top award recipient for this training.



**J. DUI Enforcement Award**

The DUI Enforcement Award is given to up to two (2) deputies with the highest statistical performance in DUI/DWI investigations leading to the arrest of persons for violations of all laws pertaining DUI/DWI. Statistical performance includes on view arrests and any charging documents issued at a later time. The nominee receives a pin and certificate.

The deputy with the top statistical performance throughout the Office of the Sheriff in this area will additionally be awarded the opportunity to attend the annual MADD Awards banquet. The Awards Committee board members will forward the nominated deputy selection to the training coordinator who shall be responsible for

registering the top award recipient for this training.



**K. K9 Commendation Award**

The K9 Commendation Award is given to one (1) deputy per year within the K9 Unit who displays exceptional expertise and performance in the areas related to K9 enforcement, and who displays great credit upon the Office of the Sheriff. The nominee receives a pin and certificate.



**NOTE: If feasible the awarded deputy shall also be considered to attend additional K9 training when available.**

The Awards Committee board members will forward the nominated deputy selection to the training coordinator who shall be responsible for registering the award recipient for this training.

**L. The Patriot Award**

The Patriot Award is a one (1) time award given to each deputy for their dedication to the Defense of the United States Constitution, the State of Maryland, and the local laws and ordinances of Queen Anne's County. Additionally, this award is given for the Protection of the United States Flag. The nominee receives a pin only.



**NOTE: Each deputy is given this award only once. When a new deputy is hired this award will be issued at the next annual awards banquet to that deputy.**

**M. Distinguished Volunteer Service Award**

The Distinguished Volunteer Service Award shall be awarded to a deputy and/or citizen who have selflessly volunteered themselves and their time to improve services within the community in which they live/work. Furthermore, the Office of the Sheriff seeks to

further the acceptance of these duties through recognition of both deputies and citizens whose actions have contributed to the accomplishment of the Office's mission or the safety of the community. The nominee receives a plaque and certificate.

**NOTE: This award is now combined with the Citizens Recognition Award from previous policy.**

**N. Honor Graduate Award**

The Honor Graduate Award is awarded to one (1) deputy in a Police Training Academy who consistently displays exceptional performance while in training. The deputy who is awarded this honor shall be selected with the top statistical performance when compared to other trainees in the areas of grade point average, physical skills average, shooting, testing scores, driving scores, hand to hand combat, physical performance testing, and practical application scores.

If there is only one trainee in a police academy for the calendar year, the sole deputy to be selected for this award shall maintain a Grade Point Average for all categories listed with a minimum of 90%. The training coordinator maintains consistent interaction with these deputies while in the academy and therefore, he/she is best suited to nominate and/or provide documentation to the awards committee regarding this nomination. The nominee receives a pin and certificate.



**O. Years of Service Award**

The Years of Service Award shall be awarded to both sworn and civilian personnel for their years of service to the Office of the Sheriff, which shall proceed at five (5) year increments during employment. The nominee receives a pin only.



**P. Civilian Service Employee Award**

The Civilian Service Employee Award shall be awarded to a civilian staff member of the Office of the Sheriff for exceptional performance by civilian staff in the performance of their official duties. The nominee receives a plaque, pin, and certificate.



**Q. Exceptional Driving Skills Citation**

The Exceptional Driving Skills Citation is awarded to deputies who display safe driving skills for a period of five years in which the deputy has had no preventable departmental accidents, nor had any negative Job Observation Reports for bad driving habits. The nominee receives a certificate only.

**R. Business Owners Service Award**

The Business Owners Service Award is awarded to businesses that have consistently contributed their time and support to Law Enforcement as well as their community. The nominee receives a plaque and certificate.

**S. Sheriff's Quarterly Award**

The Sheriff's Quarterly Award is awarded to any employee of the Office of the Sheriff for going above and beyond their normal duties, and for displaying daily initiative to achieve the mission of the Office. This award is solely decided upon and selected by the Sheriff and not by the awards committee. The nominee receives a plaque and certificate.

**T. Deputy of the Month**

The Deputy of the Month Award is awarded to deputies in the Patrol/Field Operations Division who display exceptional performance in all areas of their job function for a particular month of the calendar year. This award nominee is selected only by the Field Operations Commander and not by the Awards Committee.

**U. Hazardous Duty Citation**

The Hazardous Duty Citation is given to members of the Office of the Sheriff who have worked during a time of crisis and or state of emergency during inclement weather. The nominees will receive a certificate only.

**V. Allied Agency or Civilian Recognition Award**

The Allied Agency or Civilian Recognition Award is given to Allied Agencies or civilians who have provided assistance to the Office of the Sheriff above and beyond the normal course of business, provided assistance to a deputy in distress or made a significant contribution to the preservation of life, property or public welfare during a call for service in Queen Anne's County. The nominee will receive a plaque and certificate.

**XIII. CALEA References:** None

**XIV. Proponent Unit:** Awards Committee

**XV. Cancellation:** Index Code 203  
dated 06/15/16

---

Sheriff Gary Hofmann