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Purpose

To develop guidelines for the issuance of official awards to deserving members of the Department and the public.

Policy

The Virginia Beach Police Department publicly recognizes and rewards extraordinary, meritorious, or conspicuously outstanding acts of heroism and other acts, in service to the community, which are above and beyond those normally expected. The Police Awards Program recognizes members of the Virginia Beach Police Department, law enforcement officers from other departments or agencies, and citizens.

Awards Ceremony

The Department will have a public award ceremony during the second and fourth quarters of each year. Additionally, special award ceremonies may be designated by the Chief of Police and held at any other time.

Police Awards

In descending order of precedence, the following types of awards have been established:

1. **The Medal of Valor:** Awarded to any sworn or ancillary member of the Department of Police or other law enforcement agency who distinguishes themselves conspicuously by gallantry and at the risk of their life. Refer to 'Awards Selections Procedure' Section for specific criteria. The Medal of Valor is a Maltese cross medallion. The Virginia Beach City Seal is affixed to the center, is underscored with "Medal of Valor" and is crowned with laurel branches and three stars. The medal is suspended from a clasp by a blue draped ribbon. Award recipients will receive the medal itself, a service ribbon commensurate with the award and a certificate embossed with the insignia of the actual medal. The service ribbon will be blue enamel enclosing a gold star. The certificate will be framed and include the recipient's name and rank, as well as the date the award was presented.
2. **Silver Cross:** Awarded to any sworn or ancillary member of the Department of Police or other law enforcement agency who distinguishes themselves by extraordinary bravery not justifying the Medal of Valor award. Refer to 'Awards Selections Procedure' Section for specific criteria. The Silver Cross is a Maltese cross medallion. The Virginia Beach City Seal is affixed to the center, is underscored with "Silver Cross" and is crowned with laurel branches and three stars. The medal is suspended from a clasp by a red draped ribbon. Award recipients will receive the medal itself, a service ribbon commensurate with the award, and a certificate embossed with the insignia of the actual medal. The service ribbon will be red enamel enclosing a silver star. The certificate will be

framed and include the recipient's name and rank, as well as the date the award was presented.

3. Medal of Merit: Awarded to any member of the Department of Police or other law enforcement agency who distinguishes themselves by performing their duties in a manner that clearly exceeds what is normally required or expected or for a highly creditable police accomplishment. Refer to 'Awards Selections Procedure' Section for specific criteria. The Medal of Merit is a Maltese cross medallion. The Virginia Beach City Seal is affixed to the center, is underscored with "Medal of Merit" and is crowned with laurel branches and three stars. The medal is suspended from a clasp by a white draped ribbon. Award recipients will receive the medal itself, a service ribbon commensurate with the award, and a certificate embossed with the insignia of the actual medal. The service ribbon will be white enamel enclosing a silver star. The certificate will be framed and include the recipient's name and rank, as well as the date the award was presented.
4. Blue Star: Awarded to any sworn or ancillary member of the Department of Police who has been killed, wounded or injured in the performance of their duties. Refer to 'Awards Selections Procedure' Section for specific criteria. The Blue Star is equivalent to the U.S. Government's Purple Heart. The Blue Star is a Maltese cross medallion. The Virginia Beach City Seal is affixed to the center, is underscored with "Blue Star" and is crowned with laurel branches and three stars. The medal is suspended from a clasp by a blue and white draped ribbon. Award recipients will receive the medal itself, a service ribbon commensurate with the award, and a certificate embossed with the insignia of the actual medal. The service ribbon will be enamel, and blue and white in color. The certificate will be framed and include the recipient's name and rank, as well as the date the award was presented.
5. Life Saving with Valor: Awarded to any sworn or ancillary member of the Department of Police or any other law enforcement agency who distinguishes him/herself by performing extraordinary physical acts that results in the preservation of human life. Only one award can be given for each instance, regardless of the number of lives saved. Refer to 'Awards Selections Procedure' Section for specific criteria. The Life Saving with Valor medal is a six-pointed star with the Virginia Beach City Seal affixed to the center underscored with "Life Saving with Valor." The medal is suspended from a clasp by a green and white draped ribbon. Award recipients will receive the medal itself, a service ribbon commensurate with the award, and a certificate embossed with the insignia of the actual medal. The service ribbon will be green and white enamel. The certificate will be framed and include the recipient's name and rank, as well as the date the award was presented.
6. Life Saving Medal: Awarded to any sworn or ancillary member of the Department of Police or any other law enforcement agency who distinguishes himself by rendering life saving techniques, to include the administration of life-saving medications or medical devices, to aid in the preservation of a human life. Only one award can be given for each instance, regardless of the number of lives saved. Refer to 'Awards Selections Procedure' Section for specific criteria. The Life Saving medal is a six-pointed star with the Virginia Beach City Seal affixed to the center underscored with "Life Saving." The medal is suspended from a clasp by a green draped ribbon. Award recipients will receive the medal itself, a service ribbon commensurate with the award, and a certificate embossed with the insignia of the actual medal. The service ribbon will be green enamel. The certificate will be framed and include the recipient's name and rank, as well as the date the award was presented.
7. Public Service Medal: Awarded to any member of the Department of Police who distinguishes his/herself by performing at least twenty years of dedicated police services to the public with no significant disciplinary actions or break in service. Refer to 'Awards Selections Procedure' Section for specific criteria. The Public Service Medal is a Maltese cross medallion. The Virginia Beach City Seal is affixed to the center, is underscored with "For Public Service" and is crowned with

laurel branches and one star. The medal is suspended from a clasp by a red, white, and blue draped ribbon. Award recipients will receive the medal itself, a service ribbon commensurate with the award, and a certificate embossed with the insignia of the actual medal. The service ribbon will be red, white and blue enamel. The certificate will be framed and include the recipient's name and rank, as well as the date the award was presented.

8. **Significant Incident Ribbon**: Awarded to any sworn or ancillary member of the Department of Police or other law enforcement agency who distinguishes themselves by deploying/responding to and actively taking part in an event so significant that it involves full or a significant deployment of departmental personnel to save human lives, secures property, and/or significantly affects the normal lives of the citizens of Virginia Beach. Such events may include response to a natural or man-made disaster. Refer to 'Awards Selections Procedure' Section for specific criteria. The Significant Ribbon is a service ribbon only that is white and blue stripes enamel. A star will be added for each additional significant event involving the same officer who was previously awarded. A certificate, identifying the significant incident (ie: In Response to Hurricane any name) will be framed and include the recipient's name and rank, as well as the date the award was presented.
9. **Unit Citation Ribbon**: Awarded to any unit or squad that has performed in an outstanding manner to forward the mission of the police department in making communities safer and increasing the quality of life, distinguished themselves with outstanding community service and/or outreach, and/or used innovative techniques demonstrated to have solved crime/community issues. This ribbon will be awarded biannually, and the same unit will not be eligible for the award in the same or the following year. All units within the Police Department will be eligible for this award with demonstrated and documented work performance being the sole determining factor for recipients of this award. Award recipients will receive a service ribbon, only, commensurate with the award, and an embossed certificate with the member's name and to the unit assigned that received the award. The certificate will be framed and include the recipient's name and rank, as well as the date the award was presented. The service ribbon will be blue with red stripes and a star for any subsequent awards for members previously receiving the award with the same or other units. The command will receive an accompanying plaque for display within the command.
10. **VBPD Humanitarian Ribbon**: Given in partnership with the Virginia Beach Human Rights Commission (HRC). Awarded to any member of the Department of Police or any other law enforcement agency for any act(s) or achievement(s), as determined by the HRC, to be above that which is normally required or expected and which materially or conceptually promotes cultural diversity, social awareness, equal opportunity, and human rights in our community. Award recipients will receive a Service Ribbon, only, commensurate with the award, and an embossed certificate with the member's name presented by the Virginia Beach Human Rights Commission. The service ribbon will be black on both sides with wide white stripe in the middle. A star will be added for any subsequent awards of this type, and the Chief of Police shall have sole discretion on the wearing of this award. The award will be displayed last in the row behind any VBPD issued awards, but ahead of any other authorized award such as the FBI NA Ribbon or PELS ribbon.
11. **Special Commendation Award**: Awarded to any member of the Department of Police or any other law enforcement agency for an act or achievement above that which is normally required or expected and which materially or conceptually benefits the Department and contributes to the safety of the community. Refer to 'Awards Selections Procedure' Section for specific criteria.

The award will consist of a framed certificate, which will include the recipient's name and rank, as well as the date, the award was presented.

12. Civilian Employee of the Year Award: Awarded to a civilian employee of the Police Department for exemplary performance. Refer to 'Awards Selection Procedure' section for specific criteria. The award will consist of a Department plaque listing the recipient's name by year, a framed certificate that will include the recipients name and title, as well as the date the award was presented, and a reserved parking space at their work site for one year.
13. Volunteer of the Year Award: Awarded to a volunteer of the Police Department for exemplary performance. Refer to 'Awards Selection Procedure' section for specific criteria. The award will consist of a Department plaque listing the recipient's name by year, a framed certificate that will include the recipient's name and title, as well as the date the award was presented. The command nominating the volunteer may choose to reserve a parking space at their work site for one year, if practical.

Citizen Awards

1. Commendation Award: Awarded to a citizen who performs some act involving personal danger above and beyond that which is normally expected of a citizen. The award will consist of a framed certificate which will include the name of the recipient, the date of the award, and a brief description of the act which justifies the award.
2. Meritorious Public Service Award: Awarded to a citizen for an act, which materially contributes to a police accomplishment in the field of traffic safety, crime prevention, and criminal apprehension or police/community relations. The award will consist of a framed certificate which will include the name of the recipient, the date of the award, and a brief description of the act which justifies the award.
3. Life Saving Award: Awarded to a citizen for performing an extraordinary physical act or rendering life saving techniques to aid in the preservation of a human life. The award will consist of a framed certificate, which will include the name of the recipient, the date the award was presented, and a brief description of the act which justifies the award.

Wearing Awards

Medals

Medals are to be worn only with the Class A, formal, dress blouse uniform. Medals are to be worn in one row, three inches above and centered over the name tag with the medal of higher precedence being closest to the heart. Two medals can be worn in each row.

If a second row is required, medals of higher precedence will be in the top row. Medals in the higher rows will be worn so that the medallion portion of the medal covers half of the ribbon of the medals in the lower row.

Service Ribbons

All nine decorations awarded by the department include a service ribbon that is to be worn on the officer's Class A uniform. If a service ribbon becomes damaged or worn, it will be replaced by the department. The service ribbon is to be worn directly above the stitching of the right pocket flap and centered on the nameplate. In the case of multiple awards two service ribbons can be worn in the same row.

The ribbon of highest precedence will be worn closest to the heart. If other rows are needed to

accommodate the service ribbons, the ribbons of higher precedence will be worn in the top row.

Service ribbons awarded by the VB Human Rights Commission other agencies or through courses attended (example: FBI NA, SMIP and PELS) may be worn with the approval of the Chief of Police. Permission to wear these devices must be obtained in writing and will be included in the employee's personnel jacket. These awards will have the lowest precedence and will be worn on the uniform as the last ribbon following all other departmental issued awards.

Nomination and Selection Procedure

Nomination

1. Any member or employee of the Department of Police may nominate an individual for an award. In order to ensure the qualifications as described in this policy are present, the person nominating someone should have knowledge of the event by personal observation or as a result of an investigation of the event. **For informational purposes, and to avoid duplication of effort, if the person submitting the nomination is from outside the Command of the nominee, he or she will forward a copy of the nomination packet to that person's Commanding Officer.**
2. Letters of nomination will include, but not be limited to, the following information:
 - a. A statement from at least one eyewitness, if possible.
 - b. Precise time and location of the incident.
 - c. Names of all persons rendering assistance and the nature of the assistance should be listed.
 - d. Any injury to the person being nominated should be described in detail and, if possible, a physician's report should be included.
 - e. Names, addresses, and phone numbers of all persons involved and any eyewitnesses are to be included in the statement.
 - f. The narrative should include a detailed account of the incident and any other pertinent information.
 - g. When relevant and applicable, the nomination will include related news media accounts, CADS computer printouts, recorded radio or phone transmissions, and other existing documentary evidence available.
 - h. Letters of nomination for the Civilian Employee of the Year Award should include a detailed description of the employee's job performance and accomplishments, as well as specific examples of how their work ethic exemplifies our Department's Core Values.
3. Timely submission of nominations is essential to a successful awards program. A nomination must be submitted through the chain of command to the Chief of Police as soon as possible following the act upon which it is based. All nominations must be appropriately justified and sufficiently detailed to allow for a proper evaluation and decision.
4. Nominations for awards should not be disclosed to the individual(s) or their family. Premature

public disclosure of such information is a potential source of embarrassment to those nominated. Regarding citizen nominations - In addition to submitting a nomination to be considered by the Awards Committee, it is recommended that as soon after the event as possible, letters of appreciation be sent to citizens who have distinguished themselves by assisting members of our Department. These letters should be generated by the Command that was assisted by the citizen and in no way will allude to the nomination.

Selection

1. The Chief of Police will establish an awards committee. Tenure of the committee will be for at least one year but can be extended.
2. The chairman of the Awards Committee will be the Chief's Executive Aide. The Vice-Chairman will be a Sergeant from the Office of Professional Development and Training.
3. The committee will have at least one member and an alternate from each of the following commands: First Precinct, Second Precinct, Third Precinct, Fourth Precinct, Special Operations, Detective Bureau, Special Investigations, and the Support Division.
4. Members will be sworn or ancillary employees of the department.
5. The Civilian Employee of the Year Awards Committee will consist of the Chief's Executive Aide and one non-supervisory civilian employee from each of the Operations, Investigative and Support Divisions.
6. The committee will meet in the 1st and 3rd quarter of each year, will review all nominations and forward their recommendations to the Chief of Police for final approval. The 1st quarter meeting will cover a nomination period for acts that occurred from January through June of the previous year, while the 3rd Quarter meeting will cover acts during periods from July to December of the previous year.
7. Committee members will vote on each recommendation. A majority vote determines if an award recommendation is to be forwarded to the Chief of Police. The final decision to make the award rests with the Chief of Police or his designee. The Chief of Police will only act on those recommendations submitted to him by the Awards Committee.
8. The committee, at its discretion, can recommend the presentation of a different award it feels is more appropriate for the act.
9. Committee members cannot vote on any recommendation that they themselves have made to the committee. Committee members cannot vote on any recommendation, which involves a relative.

Selection Criteria (CALEA 26.1.2)

The Medal of Valor (all must be present)

- (1) Sworn Personnel or ancillary member of our Department or another law enforcement agency.
- (2) Bravery at risk of ones life, beyond a doubt.
- (3) Clearly above the call of duty.
- (4) If not done, would not reflect negatively on the officer.

Silver Cross (all must be present)

- (1) Sworn personnel or ancillary member of our Department or another law enforcement agency.
- (2) Extraordinary bravery not justifying the award of the Medal of Valor.
- (3) Performed in the presence of great danger or personal risk and performed in an exemplary manner.
- (4) If not done, would not reflect negatively on the officer.

The Medal of Merit (some must be present)

- (1) Sworn personnel or ancillary member of our Department or another law enforcement agency.
- (2) Heroism not justifying the award of the Silver Cross.
- (3) Performance substantially above normal requirements.
- (4) Important contributions to the achievement of law enforcement goals.
- (5) Demonstrates a high degree of personal initiative.
- (6) Exemplary performance by a department member in some community project of significant importance.
- (7) Exemplary performance which is either sustained or for a single act.
- (8) Any qualified person, after receiving their fifth Special Commendation Award will automatically be considered for the Medal of Merit. The Officer who qualifies under this category must bring it to the attention of the Chief's Executive Aide.

Blue Star (all must be present)

- (1) Sworn personnel or ancillary member of our Department.
- (2) Injury/wound/death occurred during performance of ones duties.
- (3) Hospital treatment required.
- (4) In those cases in which the wound or injury was not inflicted by a deadly or dangerous weapon, the final determination will be made by the Awards Committee.

Life Saving with Valor Medal (all must be present)

- (1) Sworn personnel or ancillary member of our Department or another law enforcement agency.
- (2) The act involves at personal risk but the risk is not sufficient to justify a higher award.
- (3) At personal risk or while under duress to include lifting and carrying the person from a danger area to a safer area,
- (4) Performs a physical act and renders manual first aid techniques, without the assistance primary of medication or electronic medical, devices that result in the preservation of a human life would not have been sustained. Use of medications or electronic medical devices may be considered for nominees of this award if the above criteria were met first, and other means were used to supplement life-saving efforts.
- (5) Must be clear that the person probably would have died if no intervention was made.
- (6) One award is authorized for any incident regardless of the number of persons rescued or saved.
- (7) All members involved in a team effort to save a life are eligible for the award. The number of awards recommended under these circumstances will be at the discretion

of the Awards Committee.

Life Saving Medal (all must be present)

- (1) Sworn personnel of our Department or another law enforcement agency.
- (2) The act involves no personal risk to justify a higher award.
- (3) Performs an act utilizing medical treatment and/or a medical device that assists in providing first aid and that result in the preservation of a human life, however long.
- (4) Must be clear if not for the immediate actions of the officer(s) involved the person's life would not have been sustained if no intervention was made.
- (5) One award is authorized for any incident regardless of the number of persons rescued or saved.
- (6) All members involved in a team effort to save a life are eligible for the award. The number of awards recommended under these circumstances will be at the discretion of the Awards Committee.

Public Service Medal (all must be present)

- Sworn

- (1) Sworn personnel of our Department with at least 20 years of dedicated, faithful, and honorable service as a police officer with the Virginia Beach Police Department.
- (2) No significant disciplinary action (anything greater than a Letter of Reprimand) within the past 10 years, and no disciplinary action to include a Letter of Reprimand within the year the officer is nominated for the award.
- (3) No break in service during this twenty year period, unless the department member was a military reservist called up to active duty.
- (4) Must have at least served in at least one specialty assignment – to include a temporary assignment
- (5) Must hold or have held during the candidate's career at least one adjunct position including but not limited to: field training/police training officer, Project Life Saver officer, CIT Officer, SRO or DCJS instructor. Additionally, they must not have been removed from such position due to performance-related issues.
Note: It will be incumbent upon supervisors during annual performance reviews to determine those eligible for this award and submit the candidate's name for consideration.
- (6) Must not be on the Commonwealth's Attorney's "Brady-list" due to past or present questionable behavior or misconduct.

- Ancillary / Non- Sworn

- (1) Ancillary / Non-Sworn personnel member of our Department with at least 20 years of dedicated, faithful, and honorable service as member of the Virginia Beach Police Department.
- (2) No significant disciplinary action (anything greater than a Letter of Reprimand) within the past 10 years, and no disciplinary action to include a Letter of Reprimand within the year the member is nominated for the award.
- (3) No break in service during this twenty year period, unless the department member was a military reservist called up to active duty.
Note: It will be incumbent upon supervisors during annual performance reviews to determine those eligible for this award and submit the candidate's name for

consideration.

Significant Incident Ribbon (all must be present)

- (1) Sworn personnel with our Department who,
- (2) Was actively involved in a significant incident or event (as declared by the Chief of Police) during the occurrence of the event or in its immediate aftermath
- (3) The incident or event must have involved a complete or significant deployment of departmental personnel to save human lives, secures property, and/or significantly affects the normal lives of the citizens of Virginia Beach and last for days or weeks
- (4) The significant event must be prompted by some type of man-made or natural disaster (Examples are but not limited to: riots, terrorist act, plane crash, hurricanes, tornadoes, etc.)

Unit Citation Ribbon (some must be present)

- (1) Sworn personnel who
- (2) Served as part of a unit or squad that has performed in an outstanding manner to forward the mission of the police department in making communities safer and increasing the quality of life
- (3) distinguished themselves with outstanding community service and/or outreach
- (4) and/or used innovative techniques demonstrated to have solved crime/community issues

Human Rights Commission Humanitarian Ribbon: This award will be decided upon by members of the Human Rights Commission Award Committee, based upon criteria determined by the HRC. The selection process for this award is listed on the HRC vbgov.com homepage at: <https://www.vbgov.com/government/departments/human-resources/hrc/Pages/default.aspx>

Special Commendation Award (some must be present)

- (1) Any member of the Virginia Beach Police Department or another law enforcement agency.
- (2) Displays initiative in the fostering of an innovative, valuable or successful program in the area of community affairs, police service or criminal investigation.
- (3) Performing an act of valuable police service, demonstrating special faithfulness or perseverance.
- (4) Affecting a felony arrest, involving personal initiative without prior knowledge from an outside source.

Civilian Employee of the Year Award (All must be present)

- (1) Awarded to any civilian member of our Department
- (2) Consistently displays a positive attitude and work ethic reflects the Department's Core Values
- (3) Willing to accept additional responsibilities and promotes team work throughout the Department
- (4) Must be employed at least one year prior to being nominated

Volunteer Employee of the Year Award (All must be present)

- (1) Awarded to any volunteer member of our Department
- (2) Consistently displays a positive attitude and work ethic reflects the Department's Core Values
- (3) Willing to accept additional responsibilities and promotes team work throughout the Department
- (4) Must be employed at least one year prior to being nominated

Commendation Award (all must be present)

- (1) Awarded to any member of the general public.
- (2) Distinguishes oneself by the performance of a heroic act or achievement involving personal danger.
- (3) Must be above and beyond that normally expected of a citizen.

Meritorious Public Service Award (all must be present)

- (1) Awarded to any member of the general public.
- (2) Materially contributes to the success of a police programs in the area of traffic safety, crime prevention, a criminal apprehension or police/community relations.

Life Saving Award (all must be present)

- (1) Awarded to any member of the general public
- (2) Distinguishes oneself by the performance of an extraordinary physical act or by rendering life saving techniques to aid in the preservation of a human life, however long.