

922 Awards and Commendations

922.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This document establishes directives regarding the Departmental commendations or awards to APD employees and other individuals outside of the Department.

922.2 COMMENDATION GUIDELINES

Any employee, group of employees, or individual outside of the Department may initiate the creation of a personal commendation to honor an employee or group of employees for exceptional performance.

- (a) Accessing Commendations in APD Main SharePoint.
 1. The Commendations SharePoint page is located in SharePoint on the Committees page, under the title "Awards and Commendations".
- (b) Create and process New Commendations
 1. On the Commendations page, click on "New Item" to create a new commendation. Alternatively, from the APDnet home page, click on the yellow star under "Commendations Form" to create a new commendation.
 2. Upon completion of the commendation, enter the name of the next person in the COC who needs to sign the commendation in the "Who needs to be notified next?" field at the bottom of the commendation.
 3. After entering the name of the next person in the COC, click on "Save". Once the form is saved, an email is automatically sent to the specified person with a link to the commendation; the creator will receive a confirmation email.
 4. The next reviewers will add their names, dates, and comments to the commendation. The reviewers will remove their name from the "Who needs to be notified next?" field and place the next reviewer's name in the field and save the document.
 5. This process continues until the appropriate Assistant Chief reviews the form.
 6. When the Assistant Chief completes his or her review and comments, the Assistant Chief will click the "Complete" check box.
 7. Checking the "Complete" check box triggers the next workflow. The commendation will automatically transfer from the "Active" view to the "Archives" view and will be automatically converted to a Word document in the "Commendation Word Documents" view.
 8. The Commendations site administrator will email the Commendation, in Word format, to the affected employee(s), file the commendation in the affected employee(s) personnel file, and email the commendation to Civil Service for retention.

922.3 AWARD GUIDELINES

922.3.1 AWARDS COMMITTEE

- (a) Members of the Committee will be selected by the Committee chairperson, with final approval by the Committee coordinator.
 1. Five (5) committee members, in addition to the chairperson and Committee Secretary, must be present to vote on nominations.
 2. The secretary is a non-voting position.
 3. The chairperson votes only in case of a tie.
- (b) The Committee may recommend a different award than a nomination recommends to maintain the integrity of the Department's award system.
- (c) The Chief reviews and has final approval over all recommendations for awards made by the Committee.

922.3.2 AWARD NOMINATION PROCEDURES

(a) Nomination instructions for Honorable Conduct, Military Service, Hazardous Deployment, Academic Achievement, Master Peace Officer, Safe Driving, and Fitness Ribbon can be found on the respective request forms.

(b) Nomination for the Distinguished Command Medal will be sent by a commander and/or a division manager to Executive Staff for consideration. This award will not be routed through the Awards Committee.

~~(a)~~(c) An employee wishing to nominate another employee or a citizen for an award, except Unit of the Year, will:

1. Complete nomination packet consisting of a memorandum ~~(NOT Personal Commendation form)~~ providing detailed information as to why the nomination is being made and attach all necessary documentation (e.g., reports, letters, newspaper articles) to support the nomination.
2. Nomination packets will then be routed up the Chain-of-Command to the Commander/Division Manager level.
3. The receiving Commander/Division Manager will ensure that the nomination packet, including all supporting documentation, is forwarded to the Committee Secretary at APDAwardsCommittee@austintexas.gov. The Committee will then forward approved award nominations to the Chief of Police or designee.
4. Nominations should be submitted within one year of the event, however, an amnesty period will be offered annually to employees for nominations for events that occurred more than 1 year ago.

~~(b)~~(d) Nominations for Unit of the Year procedures are as follows:

1. An employee wishing to nominate a unit for Unit of the Year will submit a nomination packet to their respective Commander/Division Manager no later than December 1st. The packet should consist of:
 - (a) A two to three page summary memo ~~(NOT Personal Commendation Form)~~ containing an overview of the unit's accomplishments and up to 10 additional pages of supporting documentation (i.e. commendations, press releases, letters of recommendations, etc).
 - (b) A list of all personnel who were unit members for at least 6 months during the calendar year and the actual dates each member was assigned to that unit.
 - (c) Data used for nominations should run from calendar year start and end dates to ensure consistent time frames.
 - (d) There will be three awards per year for Unit of the Year. One unit will be recognized from patrol services, one unit will be recognized from non-patrol units, and one civilian unit will be recognized. Nominations can be made for either designation. The nomination should be limited to individual shifts or units and not for entire divisions, sections, or other large groupings.
2. Each Commander/Division Manager will review the nomination packets and forward the packets to the APD Awards Committee email inbox by the deadline designated by the Awards Chairperson. The Awards Committee will meet after the submission deadline and make recommendations to Executive Staff for the Unit of the Year awards.
3. The final decision will be made by the Chief and sent to the Awards Committee Chair by the established deadline designated by the Awards Committee Chairperson.
4. The unit selected must commit to having 80% of their staff attend the Chief's presentation of the award.

922.4 CITIZEN AWARDS

The following awards are authorized for citizens and shall consist of a citation mounted on a plaque or placed in a certificate holder or a crystal desk weight supplied by the department:

- (a) Distinguished Service Citation

1. Presented by the Chief or designee to award citizens for providing exceptional service to the Department under emergency or hazardous conditions while displaying uncommon courage and good judgment.
- (b) Certificate of Recognition
 1. Presented by the Chief or designee to award citizens for providing unexpected and exceptional service, without regard for compensation, to the Department over any period of time. The provided service may include support of the Department, officers or the families of officers.

922.5 EMPLOYEE AWARDS

Medals, ribbons, and authorized pins and medallions shall only be worn as specified in Department General Orders. Employees will not receive an award ~~through the below process~~ while under formal investigation for violating a departmental general order without the consent of the Chief.

(a) The following awards, citations, and/or ribbons are for all employees:

1. Medal of Valor
2. Distinguished Command Medal
3. Purple Heart
4. Life Saving Medal
5. Meritorious Service Medal
6. Unit of Year
7. Meritorious Unit Medal
8. Superior Service Citation
9. Servant Leadership Citation
10. Community Service Citation
11. Honorable Conduct Citation
12. Military Service
13. Hazardous Deployment
14. Special Response Team (SRT) Campaign Ribbon
15. [Essential Services Response Ribbon](#)
- ~~15-16.~~ Academic Achievement
- ~~16-17.~~ Master Certification Ribbon
- ~~17-18.~~ Safe Driving Ribbon
- ~~18-19.~~ Fitness Award
- ~~19-20.~~ Certificate of Recognition

(b) A medal and device can be awarded for each occurrence unless specifically stated under each description.

(c) To order replacement medals and/or ribbons, the employee shall ~~fill out the approved replacement form signed by their division commander and routed to Awards Secretary~~ [complete form PD0304 Awards Reissue Request and email it to APDAwardsCommittee@austintexas.gov](#) for processing.

922.5.1 MEDAL OF VALOR

Conferred for displaying exceptional bravery and courageous action, risking life or serious bodily injury, while in the performance of duty, thereby earning high honor and distinction and bringing favorable recognition to the Department.

- (a) Recipient will receive a medal, ribbon, "V" device, and certificate.
- (b) Presented by the Chief.

922.5.2 DISTINGUISHED COMMAND MEDAL

(a) Conferred for distinguished command as demonstrated by:

1. Exceptional and courageous command during critical times which required extraordinary police service; ~~or~~
2. Clearly exceptional command and leadership for an extremely difficult or hazardous project or task which was highly successful or brought great recognition to law enforcement; or

3. Clearly exceptional command and leadership, which have been consistently demonstrated over an extended period of time.

~~4. Nominations for this award will be sent by a Commander and/or Division manager to Executive Staff for consideration. This award will not be routed through the Awards Committee for consideration.~~

(b) Recipient will receive a medal, ribbon, lapel pin and certificate.

(c) Presented by the Chief or designee.

922.5.3 PURPLE HEART

Conferred for sustaining, through no fault of their own, serious bodily injury (~~bodily injury~~ that involves a substantial risk of death or protracted loss or impairment that continues after medical intervention) or death resulting from a suspect's actions in the line of duty under honorable circumstances, which brought favorable recognition to the Department. In addition, this award may be conferred if injury was averted from a projectile by use of body armor.

(a) Recipient will receive a medal, ribbon, and certificate.

(b) "V" device may be awarded.

(c) Presented by the Chief or designee.

922.5.4 LIFE SAVING MEDAL

Conferred for going above and beyond what is expected to save a human life. The event must have involved specific and direct intervention. The person receiving the life-saving efforts needs to survive for at least 24 hours.

(a) Recipient will receive a medal, ribbon, and certificate.

(b) "V" Device may be awarded.

(c) Presented by the Chief or designee.

922.5.5 MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL

Conferred for meritorious service demonstrated through outstanding performance of duty under clearly hazardous and complicated conditions, or when the service delivered clearly contributed to a high degree of success in a difficult or complicated project or task by an individual.

(a) Recipient will receive a medal, ribbon, and certificate.

(b) "V" Device may be awarded.

(c) Presented by the Chief or designee.

922.5.6 UNIT OF THE YEAR CITATION

(a) Presented to three outstanding units each year, based upon:

1. ~~m~~Meritorious service as demonstrated through exceptional performance by all members during extremely hazardous duty; or

2. ~~e~~Exceptional collective outstanding performance which exemplified dedication to the Unit mission or assignment over an extended period of time. One unit will be recognized from patrol services, one unit will be recognized from non-patrol units, and one civilian unit will be recognized.

~~(a)~~(b) Recipient will receive a medal, ribbon and certificate for each Unit member.

~~(b)~~(c) Presented by the Chief or designee.

922.5.7 MERITORIOUS UNIT MEDAL

Conferred for meritorious service demonstrated through outstanding performance of duty under clearly hazardous and complicated conditions, or when the service delivered clearly contributed to a high degree of success in a difficult or complicated project or task by a unit. A list of all personnel who were unit members for at least 6 months during the calendar year and the actual dates each member was assigned to that unit is required.

(a) Recipient will receive a medal, ribbon, and certificate.

(b) "V" Device may be awarded.

(c) Presented by the Chief or designee.

922.5.8 SUPERIOR SERVICE CITATION

- (a) Presented to employees for:
 - 1. Demonstrating a superior commitment to quality service or caring service within the community or Department; ~~or~~
 - 2. Exhibiting outstanding problem-solving skills which brings recognition to the individual and Department; or
 - 3. Actions that go beyond the expected duties and responsibilities of the employee's job description within the department.
- (b) Recipient will receive a medal, ribbon, and certificate.
- (c) Presented by the Chief or designee, or the employee's commander/manager.

922.5.9 SERVANT LEADERSHIP CITATION

- (a) Presented to employees for:
 - 1. Regardless of rank or position within the Department, consistently focusing primarily on the growth and well-being of people and the communities to which they serve;
 - 2. Acknowledging other people's perspectives, giving them the support they need to meet their work and personal goals, involving them in decisions where appropriate, and fostering a sense of community within the Department; or
 - 3. Enriching the lives of individuals, building a better organization and ultimately creating a more just and caring community.
- (b) Recipient will receive a medal, ribbon and certificate.
- (c) Presented by the Chief or designee, or the employee's commander/manager.

922.5.10 COMMUNITY SERVICE CITATION

- (a) Presented to employees who engage in the following behavior over an extended or continuous period of time:
 - 1. Demonstrating a voluntary act of donating time and devotion to the community while promoting the safety, health, education, or welfare of the citizens;
 - 2. Providing volunteer community service which results in favorable recognition of the Department; or
 - 3. Actions that go beyond the required duties and responsibilities of the employee's job description that promote the Department's community policing principles.
- (b) Recipient will receive a medal, ribbon, and certificate.
- (c) Presented by the Chief or designee, or the employee's commander/manager.

922.5.11 HONORABLE CONDUCT CITATION

- (a) Presented to employees for completing 10, 20, or 30 years (aggregate) of service, as long as the employee:
 - 1. Is in good standing;
 - 2. Receives a favorable recommendation from their supervisor; and
 - 3. After the formula set out in (b) has been applied.
- (b) Calculation of eligibility:
 - 1. Written Reprimand
 - (a) Loss of 6 months eligibility (other than for a collision or minor traffic infraction)
 - 2. Suspension
 - (a) One (1) to three (3) days suspension results in a loss of (1) year of eligibility.
 - (b) Four (4) to fifteen (15) days suspension requires ten (10) years consecutive honorable service starting from the last day of suspension or results in a loss of five (5) years of eligibility from the aggregate amount; whichever period is shorter.
 - (c) Sixteen (16) or more days suspension requires ten (10) years consecutive honorable service starting from last day of suspension.
- (c) A minimum amount of time must pass between a dishonorable event and consideration for the Citation as determined by the Chief or his designee. The purpose is to prevent presenting the

award to someone who has recently received discipline, thereby undermining the significance of the Citation.

- ~~(d)~~ An employee who remains eligible under the criteria above for 20 and 30 years of honorable service may add the following devices:
 - 1. One authorized bronze star device for 20 years.
 - 2. Two authorized bronze star devices for 30 years.
- ~~(e)~~ To apply for the Honorable Conduct Citation:
 - 1. Employees must complete the request form, and attach a copy of their complaint history to the form and submit both to their supervisor.
 - 2. Supervisors will review the complaint history and make a recommendation concerning the employee's eligibility. Supervisors will sign the form and forward it to the Commander of IAD for sworn employees and APD Human Resources for civilian employees.
 - 3. The request will be reviewed to confirm the criteria of a Honorable Conduct Citation has been met. Once confirmed, the Commander/Supervisor, or their designee, will sign the form and forward it to the Awards Committee Secretary.
- ~~(f)~~(d) Recipient will receive a medal, ribbon and certificate for 10 year award and subsequent star device and certificate for 20 and 30 year awards.
- ~~(g)~~(e) Presented by the employee's commander/manager or designee.

922.5.12 MILITARY SERVICE RIBBON

Issued to personnel honorably discharged from any U.S. military service ~~in one of the U.S. military branches (e.g., Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, National Guard, or Reserves).~~

- (a) A single star may be added to the ribbon for each foreign combat theater deployment.
- ~~(b)~~ To apply for the Military Service Ribbon employees must:
 - 1. complete a request form;
 - 2. provide a copy of their U.S. Department of Defense Form DD214, or equivalent paperwork from the Reserve or National Guard;
 - 3. submit the form to the Committee Secretary for Committee Chair's approval.
- ~~(c)~~(b) Recipient will receive a ribbon, and Certificate.
- ~~(d)~~(c) Presented by the employee's commander or designee.

922.5.13 HAZARDOUS DEPLOYMENT RIBBON

~~(a)~~ Conferred for response and deployment to a natural or man-made disaster or continued civil unrest and riotous behavior in a public safety capacity under hazardous and extended conditions inside or outside the City of Austin.

- ~~(b)~~(a) Only the initial ribbon received will be worn. Subsequent awards will be indicated by an authorized star device placed on the first award ribbon (up to four stars, representing a total of five awards).
- ~~(c)~~ Hazardous Deployment Ribbon request forms will be provided by the Emergency Planning and Response Unit who will assist employees in determining their eligibility.
- ~~(d)~~ The Hazardous Deployment Ribbon form will be routed to the APD Awards Committee who will make the final recommendation to the Chief
- ~~(e)~~(b) Recipient will receive a ribbon and copy of Hazardous Deployment Ribbon request.
- ~~(f)~~(c) Presented by the Chief or designee.

922.5.14 SPECIAL RESPONSE TEAM (SRT) CAMPAIGN RIBBON

- (a) Presented to members of Units which the Chief determines:
 - 1. Are directly involved in the resolution of a large-scale crowd-control incident which immediately jeopardizes the safety of citizens, or causes great concern to a large segment of the Austin community; and
 - 2. The recipient demonstrated exceptional tactics, team work, courage, and self-discipline under hazardous conditions.
- (b) Only the initial ribbon received will be worn. Subsequent awards will be indicated by an authorized star device placed on the first award ribbon (up to four stars, representing a total of five awards).

- ~~(c) SRT Campaign Ribbon request forms will be provided by the SRT Command Staff who will ensure officers have met the award's criteria.~~
- ~~(d)~~ (c) Recipient will receive a ribbon and certificate.
- ~~(e)~~ (d) Presented by the Chief or designee.

922.5.15 ESSENTIAL SERVICES RESPONSE RIBBON

Conferred for continuing to provide essential services to the community during a natural or man-made disaster, or public health crisis in a public safety capacity under hazardous and extended conditions inside the City of Austin.

- (a) Only the initial ribbon received will be worn. Subsequent awards will be indicated by an authorized star device placed on the first award ribbon (up to four stars, representing a total of five awards).
- (b) Essential Services Response Ribbon request forms will be provided by the Emergency Planning and Response Unit who will assist employees in determining their eligibility.
- (c) The Essential Services Response Ribbon form will be emailed to the APD Awards Committee who will make the final recommendation to the Chief.
- (d) Recipient will receive a ribbon and copy of The Essential Services Response Ribbon request.
- (e) Presented by the Chief or designee.

922.5.156 ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT RIBBON

~~(a) Issued to personnel who have received an academic degree and/or completed leadership or management training. submit to the Incentive Pay Coordinator a completed request form.~~

~~(b)~~ (a) The following devices may be worn on the Ribbon:

1. One silver diamond device for a Bachelor's degree,
2. One single lamp device for a Master's or Doctorate degree.
3. One single "L" device ~~will be worn on the ribbon~~ for the APD Leadership Academy or Department approved long-term management/leadership school.
4. The "L" device may be worn with the Diamond or Lamp device if the employee has been awarded both devices.

~~(c) The Incentive Pay Coordinator will review the request and approve only if the criteria in General Order 922 (Academic Achievement Ribbon) has been met.~~

~~(d)~~ (b) ~~Issued by Awards Committee Secretary~~ Recipient will receive a ribbon and appropriate device.

~~(e)~~ (c) Presented by the employee's commander or designee.

922.5.167 MASTER CERTIFICATION RIBBON

~~(a) Issued to officers achieving a Master Peace Officer Certification through the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement, completing the request form and sending to the Awards Committee Secretary.~~

~~(b)~~ (a) Recipient will receive a ribbon. ~~Issued by Awards Secretary who will forward the form to the officer's personnel file for archiving.~~

~~(e)~~ (b) Presented by the employee's commander or designee.

922.5.178 SAFE DRIVING RIBBON

This award is given to personnel who maintain a safe driving history while driving a City vehicle. A ribbon is given at three (3) years (aggregate), with an authorized star device added at 5, 10, 15 and 20 years of safe driving (up to four stars, representing a total of five awards).

(a) Eligibility is determined by subtracting one (1) year from the officer's total years of service for each preventable collision. After 5 years, a collision will no longer be counted against the officer if no other preventable collision has occurred within the period requested for the award.

~~(b) Officers must initiate receiving the ribbon by following the instructions on the Safe Driving Award form.~~

~~(b)~~ (b) ~~Approved awards are issued by Awards Committee Secretary. Completed forms will be forwarded to the officer's personnel file for archiving.~~ Recipient will receive a ribbon and/or appropriate device.

(c) Presented by the employee's commander or designee

922.5.1~~89~~ FITNESS RIBBON

Issued to employees who have successfully completed their annual physical assessment with results rating them in the top 10 percent for their age category. ~~Initial ribbon is approved by Health Services upon meeting established criteria.~~

(a) Subsequent awards will be indicated by an authorized star device placed on the first award ribbon. The additional star device may be added in five (5) year increments, up to four stars, for a total of five (5) awards.

~~(a)(b) Issued by Awards Committee Secretary who will forward the completed form to the officer's personnel file for archiving.~~ Recipient will receive a ribbon or appropriate device.

922.5.1~~920~~ CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION

Certificate presented by a commander/manager or designee to show recognition for exceptional effort or for a job well done.

922.6 MEMORABILIA

Department personnel who wish to distribute memorabilia (i.e. Challenge Coins, hats, t-shirts and etc.) that represent the Austin Police Department, an Austin Police Department unit or shift, and/or displays the Austin Police Department Badge, and/or other similarity are required to have approval by the Chief of Police or the Chief of Police's designee. The requestor must submit a memo requesting approval along with a photograph of the memorabilia to their chain of command up to their Assistant Chief. Pre-approved artwork can be found in the Approved APD Forms folder on the G drive.

Memorabilia shall not be offensive or inflammatory.