

# Germantown Police Department

## Policies and Procedures

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**Number:** 1-15  
**Effective Date:** January 1, 2003  
**Subject:** Awards and Commendations  
**Previous Revisions:**

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### I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a uniform system for the nomination and selection of members of the Germantown Police Department in recognition of meritorious and commendable service.

### II. POLICY

Police officers are expected to exhibit unlimited integrity, professionalism and courage as normal qualities. From time to time, one or more officers will exceed these standards set for law enforcement. Therefore, it is the policy of the Germantown Police Department to recognize superior work performance, which enhances individual and Department morale.

### III. DEFINITIONS AND CRITERIA

Awards Committee – The Awards Committee is established with the responsibility of evaluating and classifying awards and commendation reports, and for recommending appropriate action to the Chief of Police.

Eligible Candidates – Personnel meeting the criteria for eligibility for various awards.

Medal of Honor – The highest award bestowed upon personnel of the Department. This medal may be awarded posthumously to personnel who, in the line of duty, give their life or to personnel who distinguish themselves by the performance of an act of courage involving risk of imminent danger to their life, with the knowledge of the risk.

The act must have been performed for the purpose of saving or protecting human life. There may be no margin of doubt or possibility of error in awarding this honor. Personnel must render themselves conspicuous by an act so outstanding that it clearly distinguishes their courage.

Medal of Valor – This medal may be awarded to personnel who, in the line of duty, distinguish themselves by an act of courage involving risk of serious personal injury, with the knowledge of the risk, for the purpose of saving human or protecting human life; or a similar act which is

necessary to effect an arrest or prevent the escape of a person who committed an act which seriously exposed any person to death or serious physical injury; or in the course of an extended investigation when officers are subjected to risks that continuously expose them to grave danger.

Service Medal – This medal recognizes individual sacrifice through incurring serious injury, under honorable conditions, in the line of duty. Although each case is considered on its own merits, normally requires a minimum of 48 hours of hospitalization to qualify, under “serious” criterion.

Medal of Merit – This award is given to personnel of the Department who exhibit continued performance of duty in an exemplary manner, or perform an act or acts of intelligent and valuable service, which far exceeds normal expectations. Additional criteria shall include the submission of any device or method adopted to increase efficiency in an administrative or operation procedure, or a display of initiative in fostering an innovative, valuable and successful community program.

Life Saving Award – This award may be presented to personnel who, in the performance of their duties, physically rescue a person from the likelihood of certain death; or render first aid in a distinguished or unusually creditable nature to a person whose life is in immediate jeopardy; or render first aid in a manner that sustains the person and enables the person to be delivered alive to a medical facility.

Civilian Award – A Certificate of Service may be awarded by the Chief of Police to a civilian who has rendered assistance to the Department in an emergency, or who has significantly contributed to the welfare and safety of the community. The committee will not be required to review Certificates of Service.

Civic Award – Awards honoring Department personnel by an external organization. Upon request, the Awards Committee may recommend candidates to external organizations desiring to present civic awards to Department personnel.

Letters of Commendation – Recognition for action or performance which is well above average in quality, but not sufficiently outstanding to justify one of the foregoing awards. Any member of the Department receiving commendatory information about a Department employee will forward the information to the employee’s immediate supervisor. The supervisor will prepare a commendation form, and then forward the commendation to the Chief of Police for review. The Awards Committee will not be required to review letters of commendation.

On approval by the Chief of Police, the original Letter of Commendation will be placed in the employee’s personnel file, and copies will be submitted to the commended employee and his/her supervisor.

On disapproval, the letter of commendation will be returned to the supervisor who originally submitted the letter, along with a written statement from the Chief of Police, which explains why the commendation was denied.

#### **IV. PROCEDURE**

##### **A. Awards Committee**

1. The Awards Committee is established with the responsibility of evaluating and classifying awards and commendation reports and for recommending appropriate action to the Chief of Police.
2. The Awards Committee shall normally be comprised of Command Staff members. The Awards Committee may also include other department personnel, including lieutenants, patrol officers, detectives and dispatcher/jailers. Assignment is at the discretion of the Chief of Police.
3. If a committee member is being considered for an award, he/she may not vote on that particular recommendation and must be temporarily replaced by an appropriate substitute.

##### **B. Nomination Process**

1. The commanding officer of an individual whose work performance or action is worthy of formal recognition shall investigate the incident in question.
2. The following suggestions are offered as guidelines for the investigation:
  - a. Interview of the nominated individual.
  - b. Interview of the superior officer on duty at the time of the incident.
  - c. Interview of persons who witnessed the incident.
  - d. View the incident scene, if possible.
  - e. Review Department records, where applicable.
3. After completion of the investigation, the commanding officer shall complete a Recommendation for Commendation or Award form (on Department memo form) if the employee is to be recommended. The report shall indicate how the actions of the nominee met or exceeded criteria for the award.
4. The report of findings, complete with supportive exhibits, shall be forwarded to the Command Staff for review.

##### **C. Selection Process**

1. The Awards Committee shall meet as necessary or as ordered by the Chief of Police.

2. The members of the Awards Committee shall judiciously apply the criteria as specified for each award.
3. The Awards Committee may request a personal interview with the nominee or with witnesses of the incident. The committee may also conduct any additional investigation as deemed necessary.
4. If the committee finds that the employee's action does not meet the criteria for the recommended award, the committee may make a recommendation for a more properly fitting award.
5. The committee shall, within ten working days of the receipt of the nomination, meet to evaluate the nomination. The committee will recommend any awards or commendations that are merited.
6. Upon majority vote by the committee, the Awards Committee shall forward the recommendation to the Chief of Police for final approval.
7. If the committee votes to disapprove the commendation, the recommended employee shall be notified in writing by the committee.
8. Upon receiving approval from the Chief of Police, the Awards Committee shall ensure an award notification is forwarded to the recipient's supervisor and properly recorded in the recipient's permanent personnel file.
9. Formal presentation of awards (with the exception of Letters of Commendation) shall be scheduled by the Awards Committee, and the presentation shall be made by the Chief of Police or the employee's Command staff member.
10. All documentation concerning awards and commendations shall become part of the personnel file of the employee who is cited.
11. The committee shall recommend appropriate medals and certificates for adoption by the Chief of Police as official Department awards.
12. An inventory of service award medals and certificates shall be maintained by an Administrative Captain.

## **V. REVIEW PROCESS**

An annual review of this policy will be conducted to determine if it should be revised, cancelled or continued in its present form.

This order shall remain in effect until revoked or superseded by competent authority.