



# RICHMOND POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER



Subject: AWARDS AND CITATIONS

Chapter  
5

Number  
9

Pages  
15

References:

CALEA Standards: 26.1.2  
Collective Bargaining Agreement between the City of Richmond, Virginia, and Richmond Coalition of Police Effective 7/1/2024 through 6/30/2027  
Collective Bargaining Agreement between the City of Richmond, Virginia and Service Employees International Union, Virginia 512 Effective 7/1/2024 through 6/30/2027

Related Orders:

Effective Date: **12/30/2025**

Revised By: **PD-132**

Prv. Rev. Date: **09/25/2024**

If any provision of this General Order conflicts with any collective bargaining article, the collective bargaining agreement shall govern.

Chief of Police:

## I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this directive is to explain the various types of awards and citations that are available to members of the Department.

## II. SUMMARY OF CHANGE

***This general order was updated to include new awards for sworn and professional staff personnel. Revisions to this general order are noted in bold italicized text throughout the document.***

## III. POLICY

The Richmond Police Department (RPD) will recognize outstanding performance of employees, other public safety employees, citizens and organizations making substantial personal contributions to the Department and the community. The Department will identify and recognize specific acts of heroism, bravery or notable accomplishments and establish guidelines to identify those who have distinguished themselves through performance of those acts or accomplishments.

The Department bestows awards and commendations in the form of medals and accompanying commendation bars, plaques, certificates, and letters of achievement. All communications relating to the awards and commendations process shall be routed through the chain-of-command. In order to maintain the credibility of the Awards Program,

thorough documentation supporting the nomination is mandatory and shall be attached to the nominating correspondence.

The Department will maintain records of employee recognition. Department members will ensure that all appropriate entities are notified when employees are recognized for their service. Supervisors will utilize proper notification methods by using a PD-46B for awards that are not captured, tracked, or approved by the Honors Board. On a monthly basis, supervisors will use the PD-46B to inform the Officer-In-Charge (**OIC**) of ***the Training Academy*** of employee awards and recognition that do not require Honors Board approval. [CALEA 26.1.2]

#### IV. ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

All employees are expected to fully comply with the guidelines and timelines set forth in this general order. Failure to comply will result in appropriate corrective action. Responsibility rests with the Division Commander to ensure that any violations of policy are investigated and appropriate training, counseling and/or disciplinary action is initiated.

This directive is for internal use only and does not enlarge an employee's civil liability in any way. It should not be construed as the creation of a higher standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party claims. Violation of this directive, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this Department, and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.

#### V. PROCEDURE

##### A. Nomination and Selection Procedure: [CALEA 26.1.2]

1. Any member of the Department may nominate an individual for an award, citation, or certificate, except the Chief's Citation. To ensure that the qualifications as described in this policy are present, the nominator should have knowledge of the event/action by personal observation or as a result of investigation of the event/action. The nominator must complete a PD-46 and forward it, along with any supporting documentation, to the Honors Board, as directed on the form. In case of multiple nominations being submitted in one packet, a PD-46 shall be completed for each nominated individual.
2. The PD-46 contains a section allowing the nominator to write a "Narrative of Nomination." The Narrative of Nomination section shall include, but is not limited to, the following information:
  - a. A statement from at least one eyewitness, if possible.
  - b. Precise time and location of the event/action, if applicable.
  - c. Names of all persons involved and any eyewitnesses.
  - d. Description of any injuries received by the nominee; and,
  - e. A detailed narrative of the event/action and other pertinent information.

3. Timely nominations are essential for the Awards Program to be successful. Each nomination packet shall be submitted, *either via email, in person, or through intra-city correspondence*, to the **Honors Board Chair** and the nominee's Divisional Commander.
4. The nomination may include related news media accounts, recorded radio and telephone transmissions, incident reports and/or any other documentation the nominator believes would be helpful.

B. Honors Board Selection Procedure:

[CALEA 26.1.2]

1. The Chief of Staff or designee will appoint the members of the Honors Board.
2. The Board may consist of the following members who will serve a minimum of two years:
  - a. One captain who will serve as the Board Chairperson;
  - b. At least *one* lieutenant;
  - c. At least *one* sergeant;
  - d. At least two police officers;
  - e. At least two **RPD professional staff**; and,
  - f. The OIC of the Public Affairs Unit (ex-officio member).
3. If possible, a representative will serve from each Division.

C. Honors Board:

1. The Honors Board shall meet at the call of the chairperson to review nominations and make recommendations to the Chief of Police. Members of the Richmond Police Department will serve on the Board.
2. If a member of the Board becomes eligible for any award, they shall excuse themselves from voting. A designated Department member selected by the Board shall vote instead.
3. A Department member who believes they are entitled to an award may request the Board to act on the request by writing a letter through their commander or *professional staff supervisor*.

4. If a member of the Department is recommended for an award but rejected by the Board, the member may be given either a Letter of Appreciation or a Citation Certificate.
5. The Board will review and vote on each nomination.
  - a. A majority vote determines if a recommendation will be forwarded, as submitted by the nominator, to the Chief of Police.
  - b. The Board Chairperson will serve as an ex-officio member and vote only in the case of a tie.
  - c. The Board, at its discretion, may recommend the presentation of a different award, if it is deemed more appropriate.
  - d. The Board will forward its recommendation to the Chief of Police for review and approval.
  - e. The final decision to grant the award rests with the Chief of Police.

D. ***Professional Staff Awards:***



1. This bar is earned over a five-year period of continuous service and is awarded to volunteers participating in the Neighborhood Assistance Officers Program. This ***bar*** comes in five-year increments.
2. ***The Excellent Conduct Award – This award is issued for an intelligent act contributing to a valuable accomplishment or for submission of a device, process or method adopted by the Department to increase efficiency in administrative or tactical procedure.***
3. ***The Meritorious Conduct Award – This award is issued for an intelligent and valuable service demonstrating special faithfulness, attention to duty and perseverance over an extended period.***
4. ***The Life Saving Assistance Award – This award is issued for courageous and selfless actions, quick thinking, calmness under pressure, and willful acts made during emergencies that directly contributed to the saving or preservation of a human life. Actions may include, but are not limited to:***
  - ***Performing CPR or other lifesaving aid.***
  - ***Alerting, or assisting authorities or calling for help in a timely manner.***
  - ***Rescuing an individual from immediate danger (e.g., fire, drowning, medical emergency).***
  - ***Providing critical assistance during a crisis until first responders arrived.***

*Recipients of this award embody bravery, presence of mind, and compassion for others in moments of life-threatening urgency. Their intervention reflects extraordinary civic duty and aligns with the values of public safety and community service.*

*All professional staff awards will be given a corresponding pin and plaque to acknowledge their achievement.*

5. *Professional Staff of the Year (ProSOTY) Award – presented to a professional staff member who exemplifies excellence in public service and plays a vital role in the success of the Department’s mission. This individual consistently goes above and beyond their duties, demonstrating outstanding performance, dedication, and a deep commitment to the values of professionalism, integrity, and teamwork.*

*Nominees for this award should reflect:*

- *Exceptional job performance and consistent reliability.*
- *Positive attitude and professionalism in daily interactions.*
- *Willingness to go above and beyond to support officers, staff, and the public.*
- *Initiative and innovation in solving problems or improving processes; and,*
- *Strong work ethic and dedication to the Department’s goals and values.*

*The Professional Staff of the Year (ProSOTY) is someone whose contributions have a significant and lasting impact on the Department, the community, and their colleagues.*

E. Police Medals and Bars:



1. Medal of Honor – This medal and bar is awarded for the performance of an act of gallantry and bravery above and beyond the call of duty when the level of danger is such that a member’s death or serious injury is a reasonable result.



2. Medal of Valor – This medal and bar is awarded for an act of outstanding bravery, intelligently performed in the line of duty at imminent personal hazard of life under circumstances evincing a disregard of personal consequences.



3. Police Medal – This bar is awarded for an act involving grave personal danger in the intelligent performance of duty.



4. Life Saving Bar – This bar is awarded for an act involving the rescue that sustains the life of another.



5. De-escalation Bar – This bar is awarded to employees who in the line of police duty, utilize exceptional tactical skills, verbal approaches and/or techniques to de-escalate a situation that could have resulted in the use of deadly force or used to sustain human life. These situations would include those where suicidal or homicidal individuals are acting in such a way that without intervention the results would most likely end in self-harm or harm to others.



6. Meritorious Police Conduct Bar – This bar is awarded for the following:
  - a. An intelligent and valuable police service demonstrating special faithfulness, attention to duty and perseverance over an extended period of time;
  - b. Completion of 20 years of honorable service as determined by the Personnel Unit; and,
  - c. Removal of at least 20 illegal firearms from public circulation.



7. Excellent Police Conduct Bar – This bar is awarded for the following:
  - a. An intelligent act contributing to a valuable police accomplishment or for submission of a device, process or method adopted by the Department to increase efficiency in administrative or tactical procedure; and,
  - b. Removal of at least 10 illegal firearms from public circulation.



8. The Jean-Guy LeGouffe Leadership Award **Bar** – This award will be given to the sergeant who embodies the qualities that *the late* Sergeant LeGouffe demonstrated every day throughout his career. This bar is awarded for the following:
  - a. Unselfish mindset
  - b. Creating a culture of trust
  - c. Encouraging diversity of thought
  - d. Fostering leadership in others
  - e. Valuing people
  - f. Humility

This medal is awarded to a sergeant each year based on the candidate's recommendation from their supervisor outlying their achievements performance and, demonstration of the Department's core values and values of servant leadership.



9. Rookie of the Year – This bar is awarded to the most outstanding rookie of each recruit class based on the candidate's recommendation from their supervisor outlining their achievements and performance of duties during the probationary year. **NOTE:** The candidate may not have prior law enforcement experience.

#### F. Police Awards:



1. Unit Citation Bar – This bar is awarded for exceptional performance by a Unit within the Department over a 12-month period. Only those members who have served at least six months of the qualifying period shall be eligible to receive the award. **After receiving** the Unit Citation Bar, members may wear it throughout their career regardless of assignment. Assignment into a unit that has already earned the unit citation would not entitle the transferee to wear the citation.



2. Good Conduct Bar – This bar is earned over a five-year period of continuous service with

yearly ratings received during this period of at least “successfully meets expectations.” In addition, the sworn member shall not have received any major penalty for Department charges other than a reprimand or counsel.



3. Safe Driving/Flying Bar – This bar is awarded for a three-year period of safe and satisfactory driving or for pilots who have acquired at least 2,000 hours of safe flight time. All authorized drivers who regularly operate licensed motorized equipment in the performance of their duties shall be eligible for this award. A driver must complete three years of operating a city vehicle without having had an accident defined by the Accident Review Board as “Out of Policy.” Cumulative periods of broken driving service, without a chargeable (Out of Policy) accident, totaling three years constitute eligibility for a Safe Driving award.



4. Police Instructor Bar – This bar is awarded to Department members who have been certified as a Police Instructor by the Department of Criminal Justice Services and have maintained this status for five consecutive years of active service or has instructed a minimum of 120 hours within their first three years as an instructor, as determined by the Training Division.



5. Police Firearms Bar – This bar is awarded to Department members who receive a qualifying score of 95 or better on the state-mandated firearm course. Officers must provide documentation to the Quartermaster to receive the *bar*. Once achieved, members ***must maintain a score of 95 or better to continue wearing this bar.*** Members who fail to maintain this score will ***discontinue wearing the bar.***





6. ***EXILE Bar – This bar is awarded to officers who have brought forth an EXILE case for prosecution or for any Department member who significantly enhanced or promoted the***



***EXILE Program.***

7. Special Unit Service Bars – Awarded to past and present members who have voluntarily served one year of service in good standing.

|   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
|    | Accident Reconstructionist          |
|    | <b><i>Bike Patrol</i></b>           |
|    | Canine Officer                      |
|    | <b><i>Command Post Operator</i></b> |
|    | Crowd Management Team               |
|    | Detective                           |
|   | Explosive Ordinance Disposal        |
|  | Field Training Officer              |
|  | Focus Mission Team – Tactical Unit  |
|  | General Instructor                  |
|  | Honor Guard                         |
|  | Hostage Negotiator                  |
|  | Motors Officer                      |
|  | Mounted Officer                     |
|  | Police Training Officer             |
|  | School Resource Officer             |

|   |              |
|---|--------------|
|  | SWAT         |
|  | SWAT – Medic |

G. Police Department Citations:

1. Chief's Citation – This award is presented to the employee or employees *who* have made an outstanding contribution to the Richmond Police Department as determined by the Chief of Police.
2. De-escalation Citation – This award is presented when situations occur that may not rise to the level deserving of a De-escalation medal; however, the officer utilized their skills to de-escalate the situation to a safe resolution that had the potential to be detrimental/dangerous to a citizen or public safety.
3. Department Citation – This award is presented to the employee that has been recommended for a Department medal but, upon review, the Honors Board did not feel the actions rose to the level required for the issuance of the recommended bar. The circumstances were such that the employee performed their duties in an exemplary manner and made a considerable contribution to the Richmond Police Department.
4. Lifetime Achievement Citation – In cooperation with the Fraternal Order of Police, this award is presented to individuals who during their careers have had a significant positive impact on the Richmond Police Department or public safety in the City of Richmond. The Honors Board reviews nominations and recommendations are forwarded to the Chief of Police for selection.
5. Service to Law Enforcement – This certificate is given to public safety employees, citizens, or organizations in recognition of achievements that demonstrate a sense of community and commitment that promote goodwill, improved quality of life and service to others; for acts or deeds that are performed in response to a specific problem action or need; for working in conjunction with the Richmond Police Department for commendable service that occur over an extended period of time in support of the overall mission of the Department-
6. Problem-Solver of the Quarter Award – This award is presented to officers working *anything other than patrol*, specialized assignments such as Environmental, Bicycle or Detectives. The winner must be “in good standing” at the time of award, i.e., without disciplinary or misconduct charges pending or in effect. Each *commander may* submit *a minimum of* one nomination each quarter for this award, with a maximum of two nominations. Nomination letters shall be submitted through channels to the Public Affairs Unit. The criteria for the award

shall be based upon five *guiding principles: Employee Health, Wellness, and Morale; Maintaining Trust and Legitimacy; Public Safety through Community Engagement and Partnership; Innovation through Technology; and Strategic Planning and Evidence-based Research.* This award is separate from the Officer of the Quarter award.

7. Officer of the Quarter – This award is presented to officers assigned to patrol duties in Operation Areas 1 and 2. The winner must be “in good standing” at the time of award, i.e., without disciplinary or misconduct charges pending or in effect. Each precinct must submit at least one nomination letter with supporting material, for the award each quarter, with a maximum of two nominations. Nomination letters shall be submitted through channels to the Public Affairs Unit. The criteria for the award shall be based on the quality of impact of an arrest, volunteerism/outreach, or any other activity which merits recognition. An officer may only be nominated once per quarter.
8. Sergeant of the Quarter – This award is presented to sergeants who have exhibited exceptional performance throughout the quarter. The winner must be “in good standing” at the time of award, i.e., without disciplinary or misconduct charges pending or in effect. Each *commander* submits *a minimum of* one nomination letter with supporting material, for the award each quarter, with a maximum of two nominations per award. Nomination letters shall be submitted through channels to the Public Affairs Unit. The criteria for the awards shall be based on the productivity of the nominee or any other activity which merits recognition during the quarter of the nomination. A Sergeant can be nominated only once per quarter. *The Sergeant of the Quarter award is open to all Departmental sergeants.*
9. Professional Staff of the Quarter – This award is presented to a *professional staff member* who has exhibited exceptional performance throughout the quarter. The winner must be ‘in good standing’ at the time of award, i.e., without disciplinary or misconduct charges pending or in effect. Each precinct or division submits at least one nomination letter with supporting material, for the award each quarter, with a maximum of two nominations per award. Nomination letters shall be submitted through channels to the Public Affairs Unit. The criteria for the awards shall be based on the productivity of the nominee or any other activity which merits recognition during the quarter of the nomination. A *professional staff* can be nominated only once per quarter.
10. *The Silver Star – The Silver Star is awarded by the Richmond Police Department to external first responders (Police/Fire/EMS) who demonstrate extraordinary bravery, exceptional dedication, or significant contributions to RPD-led operations or critical incidents.*



*This award includes a Silver Star certificate and insignia, recognizing*

*interagency partnership, courage, and collaboration that enhances public safety. Recipients may be recognized for acts of valor, contributions to multi-agency operations, key roles in major investigations, or exceptional teamwork and leadership. The Silver Star reflects RPD's deep appreciation for partner agency first responders.*

11. *The Powerhouse Award – This award honors one or more professional staff or sworn personnel whose exceptional energy, drive, and work ethic make them an indispensable force within the Department. The recipient of the Powerhouse Award consistently goes above and beyond in their role, demonstrating reliability, initiative, and a "can-do" attitude in everything they do.*

*Criteria should include one or more of the following:*

- *High Performance: Delivers consistently outstanding results, often exceeding expectations, contributing to connecting significant cases or assisting in solving multiple incidents.*
- *Work Ethic: Shows relentless dedication, reliability, and a strong sense of responsibility.*
- *Team Support: Actively contributes to team success by stepping up when others need help and keeping operations running smoothly.*
- *Problem-Solving: Tackles challenges head-on with determination and creative solutions. Provides an analytical effort over a long period of time.*
- *Positive Influence: Motivates and energizes those around them with professionalism and a strong, solution-focused mindset. Displays great customer service to others.*
- *Technology Support – contributes to the efficiency of the department through technology and innovation.*

*The Powerhouse Award recognizes those staff members who are the driving force behind progress—quietly or boldly getting the job done and making a meaningful impact across the Department.*



*Front:*



*Back:*

12. *The Humanitarian Award – This award honors professional staff or sworn personnel who consistently demonstrate outstanding commitment to the service of others. Service that is not directly related to the performance of their job duties.*

*Awardees should exemplify the following:*

- *Compassionate Service: Service that is above and beyond job duties to care for the emotional, physical, mental well-being, or social well-being of others.*
- *Community Impact: Active participation in outreach, volunteerism, or initiatives that uplift underserved, at-risk, or vulnerable populations.*
- *Advocacy & Leadership: Champions causes that promote human dignity, equity, and inclusion—either through personal action or through inspiring others.*
- *Integrity & Empathy: Consistently demonstrates integrity, empathy, and kindness in interactions with colleagues, community members, and those in crisis.*
- *Sustained Effort: Contributions may be from a single impactful event or, ideally, sustained acts of service over time.*

*This individual reflects the Department's highest values and is a role model of humanitarian service both on and off duty.*

H. *Significant Event Recognition Awards:*



1. *The UCI Bar – This bar is awarded to officers who worked during the 2015 UCI National Bike Event in Richmond. This bar is in recognition of the long, dedicated hours to make that event successful. The bar shall be displayed at the bottom of the award bar cluster, in front of the Service Unit bars, in chronological order of the event.*



2. *2020 Service Recognition Award – “In Honor of Extraordinary Service During Unprecedented Times” – The 2020 Service Recognition Award honors professional staff and sworn personnel who served during a year defined by a global pandemic, civil unrest, and extraordinary pressures on public safety. Despite uncertainty and risk, these employees demonstrated courage, professionalism, and resilience by supporting the community through one of the most challenging times in modern history. Professional staff will receive a corresponding pin and sworn personnel will receive a bar. Sworn personnel shall display this bar at the bottom of the award bar cluster, in front of the Service Unit bars, in chronological order of the event.*



3. *The SSI Bar – This bar is awarded to officers who participated in the Safe Summer Initiative (SSI), a joint effort crime reduction initiative with state and federal partners that began in 2024. This bar shall be displayed at the bottom of the award bar cluster, in front of the Service Unit bars, in chronological order of the event.*

I. Reporting Departmental Awards:

***The Training Academy will track all awards issued on a control card under each employee's file.***

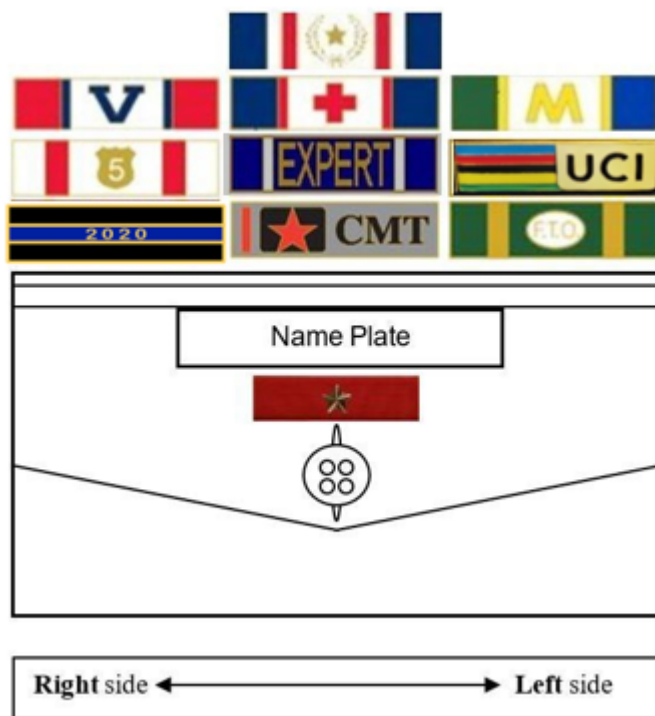
J. Reporting of Non-Departmental Awards and Employee Recognition:

[CALEA 26.1.2]

Several awards, including Letters of Appreciation, do not require Departmental approval. Upon verification that an employee has received an award, commendation, written recognition, citizen citation, etc., that does not require the Honors Board approval, the recipient's supervisor shall electronically complete a PD-46B, Notification of Employee Recognition, and forward it, and any documents provided in support of the nomination, to the OIC of the ***Training Academy***.

K. Wearing of Award Medals and Bars:

1. Breast bar awards shall be worn with the Class A – long sleeve uniform and with the formal dress uniform (white shirt and jacket).
2. Breast bar awards shall not be worn with the Class A – short sleeve uniform, Class B uniform or Department sweater unless directed by the Chief of Police or designee.
3. The Department breast bars shall be worn horizontally above the right breast pocket, centered along the top pocket seam. When wearing more than one bar, each bar shall be worn horizontally, centered as a group above the pocket, with the highest award worn ***on the right side of the uniform, farthest away from the center***. There shall be no more than three bars in each row. The ***bars*** are to be worn top to bottom in the order of their ranking, as described in sections ***V.E., V.F. and V.H.*** above. ***The bars acknowledging service during specific events (i.e., UCI, 2020, SSI, etc.) shall be worn in chronological order from the right side of the pocket to the left side following the lowest medal and/or Special Unit service bars*** in the cluster above the nameplate. See example below.



4. All non-departmental medals, i.e., awards received from other law enforcement agencies and other approved recognizing organizations, to include Richmond Coalition of Police (RCOP) and Military Branch pins, shall be worn on the right shirt pocket flap ***to the right of the button. Medals received for attending department-approved classes or events (PELS, etc.) may be added to the breast bar awards when approved by the Chief of Police. Those medals will be worn at the bottom of the bar stack.***
5. ***Medals that were previously awarded but are no longer distributed will be grandfathered in and authorized to be worn in the employee's medal stack after all other current awards (i.e. physical fitness medal, etc.).***
6. ***The Valor RVA Award Bar, awarded by the Valor RVA Association, shall be worn below the name plate on the right breast pocket flap.***



## VI. FORMS

- A. PD-46, Nomination and Award Letter
- B. PD-46B, Notification of Employee Recognition