



SAN ANTONIO POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL MANUAL



Procedure 912 – Awards and Ceremonies Program

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Forms Referenced in Procedure:	SAPD Form 5-RA; SAPD Form 65	Related Procedures:	310,

.01 INTRODUCTION

- A. This procedure establishes a process whereby members of the Department are recognized for exceptionally heroic and valorous acts, and for exemplary, meritorious, and exceptional service contributions that bring credit to the officer and the Department.
- B. This procedure also establishes a process whereby private citizens, community groups, and businesses are recognized for their unselfish contributions to the Department.

.02 POLICY

- A. It is the policy of the Department to recognize and honor both sworn and non-sworn members who perform extraordinary acts of courage and heroism, or who distinguish themselves by providing outstanding service to the Department or the community.
- B. Private Citizens, community groups, and businesses can also be recognized under this procedure for their unselfish actions that help save the life of another person, for their exemplary actions at a particular incident in response to law enforcement activity, or for their unselfish contributions to the Department.

.03 AWARDS OF HONOR

- A. *Medal of Valor Award* - This is the highest award presented by the San Antonio Police Department. This award is bestowed upon San Antonio police officers who distinguish themselves by displaying great courage, above and beyond the call of duty, in the face of immediate life-threatening peril and with full knowledge of the risks involved.
- B. *Meritorious Conduct Award* – This award is bestowed upon San Antonio police officers for heroic deeds and exceptional conduct involving great risk to their safety while performing their duties.
- C. *Lifesaving Award* - This award is bestowed upon San Antonio police officers who are directly responsible for saving a human life.
- D. *Purple Heart Award* - This award is bestowed upon San Antonio police officers who are killed or suffer serious bodily injury while encountering a hostile situation in the line of duty.

.04 AWARDS FOR SERVICE

- A. *Distinguished Service Award* - This award is presented to members who distinguish themselves for exemplary service to the Department.
- B. *Officer of the Year Award* - This award is presented to San Antonio police officers from each of three (3) ranks: Police Officer, Detective-Investigator, and Sergeant, who have provided the most outstanding service to the Department during the year.



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- C. *Certificate of Merit Award* - This award is presented to members who, by their exemplary actions, distinguish themselves at a particular incident. Examples of exemplary actions include judgment, initiative, courage, teamwork, investigative skills, and immediate recognition and response to law enforcement activity.
- D. *Community Service Award* - This award is presented to members who distinguish themselves and the Department for volunteer work to the community.
- E. *Customer Service Award* - This award is presented to members of the Department who exhibit exceptional customer service in the performance of their duties.
- F. *Good Conduct Award* – This award is presented to members of the Department who perform all duties and responsibilities in an effective manner for a period of five (5) years without any administrative disciplinary action which results in the member's reduction in rank; disciplinary action during a probationary period; suspension; written reprimand, written counseling, or demerit.

.05 AWARDS FOR ACHIEVEMENT

- A. *Safe Driving Award* – San Antonio police officers are eligible for this award upon completing five (5) consecutive years without a chargeable city vehicle crash and each subsequent five (5) years in which a member has not had a chargeable city vehicle crash.
- B. *Years of Service Award* – San Antonio police officers are eligible for this award upon completing five (5) years of continuous service with the Department and each subsequent fifth year thereafter.
- C. *Instructor's License Award* - San Antonio police officers are eligible for this award upon obtaining a Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) Instructor's License.
- D. *Master Peace Officer Certification Award* - San Antonio police officers are eligible for this award upon obtaining a Master Peace Officer's Certification from TCOLE.
- E. *Advanced Peace Officer Certification Award* - San Antonio police officers are eligible for this award upon obtaining an Advanced Peace Officer's Certification from TCOLE.
- F. *Intermediate Peace Officer Certification Award* - San Antonio police officers are eligible for this award upon obtaining an Intermediate Peace Officer's Certification from TCOLE.

.06 CITIZEN RECOGNITION AWARDS

- A. *The Citizen Hero Award* – This award is bestowed to a citizen who by their unselfish actions, attempted to help save the life of another person.
- B. *The Citizen Merit Award* – This award is bestowed to a citizen who, by their exemplary actions, distinguishes themselves at a particular incident. Examples of exemplary actions include judgment, initiative, and courage in response to a law enforcement activity.
- C. *The Certificate of Appreciation* is presented to a citizen or group who distinguish themselves by their unselfish contributions to the Department or the Community. Examples include volunteer work, donation of resources, or taking measures to help achieve a safer community.



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.07 NOMINATION PROCESS

A. Requests for Nomination:

1. Any person who witnesses or otherwise learns of an exemplary act by a member, citizen, group, or business may initiate a request for Departmental recognition by submitting SAPD Form 5-RA Recommendation for Award, and any supporting documentation, through the Office of the Chief to the Awards Evaluation Committee. Submissions are emailed to SAPD Recognition. Nominations are accepted through November 30 of each year.
2. Division, Section, and Unit Commanders shall nominate members under their command for the various awards for service by submitting SAPD Form 5-RA Recommendation for Award, and any supporting documentation through the Office of the Chief to the Awards Evaluation Committee. Submissions are emailed to SAPD Recognition. Nominations are accepted through November 30 of each year.
3. Requests for Awards for Achievement do not require nomination. Instead, they shall be submitted to the Office of the Chief on SAPD Form 65 - *Interoffice Correspondence* and must include justification for the request. The Office of the Chief shall determine if the member has met the criteria for the requested award. Submissions are emailed to SAPD Recognition.

B. Nominations received by the Awards Evaluation Committee are reviewed to ensure the actions taken by the nominated members fit the criteria for the recommended awards.

C. After a review by the Awards Evaluation Committee, any nomination that results in an award recommendation by the Committee shall be forwarded to the Office of the Chief.

D. Upon written orders issued by the Office of the Chief, the awards will be presented in accordance with Section .11 of this procedure.

.08 AWARDS EVALUATION COMMITTEE

A. The Awards Evaluation Committee is appointed in June of every odd number year (e.g. 2017, 2019, 2021, etc) by the Chief of Police and is charged with rendering recommendations for the various awards for nominated members, private citizens, community groups, and businesses.

B. The Awards Evaluation Committee serves for two (2) consecutive years and consists of a Captain, who shall serve as the Committee Chairperson, and four (4) additional sworn members, and may include up to five (5) private citizens.

C. The Awards Evaluation Committee meets as needed and, through majority decision, recommends:

1. The award is approved;
2. An alternate award is approved; or
3. No award is approved.

D. The Awards Evaluation Committee forwards all recommendations for awards, whether approved or disapproved, to the Office of the Chief.



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.09 AWARDS NOTIFICATION AND PRESENTATION

- A. The Awards Evaluation Committee notifies each nominee in writing of the recommendation made by the committee.
- B. All nominations for awards, whether approved or disapproved, are placed in the nominated member's Departmental personnel file.
- C. Approved Awards of Honor and Awards for Service are presented to officers by the Chief of Police at the Department's Annual Award Ceremony.
 - 1. Award of Honor recipients will be presented a medal, a commendation bar and a certificate.
 - 2. Officer of the Year; Detective of the Year; Sergeant of the Year recipients will be presented a plaque and a commendation bar; all others Awards for Service recipients will be presented a commendation bar and a certificate.
- D. Approved Awards for Achievement are presented by the Division Commander or his designee.
- E. Approved Citizen Hero Awards, Citizen Merit Awards, and the Certificate of Appreciation may be presented by the Chief of Police or his designee at a formal ceremony, or any other setting the Chief deems appropriate, including the citizen's residence or workplace.

.10 DISPLAYS OF AWARDS

- A. Officers receiving the Medal of Valor may display the medal portion of the award with the regulation or formal uniform during the following events:
 - 1. Speaking engagements;
 - 2. Official police inspections;
 - 3. Departmental or law enforcement special events and ceremonies; and
 - 4. As authorized by the Office of the Chief.
- B. Officers receiving Awards of Honor or Awards for Service or officers who are eligible for an Award for Achievement, may wear the commendation bar portion of the award on the regulation or formal uniform in accordance with GM Procedure 310, *Uniforms and Dress Codes*.
- C. The bar portion of all Awards of Honor and Awards for Service will be purchased by the Department and given to officers who are presented with Awards of Honor and Awards for Service.
- D. The bar portion of all Awards for Achievement may be purchased by the member receiving the award at the member's expense.
- E. The specifications for the commendation bar portions of all awards are listed in GM Procedure 310, *Uniforms and Dress Codes Appendix*.
- F. A color printout of the bar portion of all awards will be on display in each Division Office.



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.11 CEREMONIES FOR AWARDS, & PROMOTIONS & RETIREMENTS

- A. Any member receiving an award or, being promoted to a higher rank or retiring in good standing from the department may will receive public recognition at a formal ceremony, coordinated by the Office of the Chief, to be held as follows:
 - 1. Promotional ceremonies shall take place on the day before a promotion is to become effective; and
 - 2. Annual Awards ceremonies shall take place in the first quarter of the calendar year.
- B. Attendance at a Promotion or Awards ceremony is voluntary on the part of the member, or citizen.
- C. Notification:
 - 1. Members, citizens, community groups, and businesses are notified by letter from the Office of the Chief as to the date, time, and location of the formal ceremony. The letter will also inform honorees of any special needs or requirements for their particular ceremony.
 - 2. Members' Division and Section Commanders and Unit/Shift Directors are notified by the Office of the Chief as to the date, time, and location of the formal ceremony.
 - 3. The date, time, and location of the formal ceremony shall be published in the Department's Daily Bulletin.
 - 4. A list of past award winners may be found on SAPDWEB under Awards, Merits & Commendations.
- D. Responsibilities
 - 1. The Office of the Chief is responsible for coordinating all activities necessary for conducting Promotion and Awards ceremonies.
 - 2. The Payroll Services Unit is responsible for notifying the Office of the Chief when an officer has given notification of his anticipated retirement.
 - 3. Division and Section Commanders and Unit/Shift Directors of members receiving an award, or being promoted, are encouraged to attend the formal ceremony to honor officers that work or worked under their command.