
Awards and Recognition

1045.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This chapter establishes a Department award policy to formally recognize and reward exceptional performance and outstanding contributions to the Department or community by employees and citizens.

1045.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Vancouver Police Department to acknowledge and reward employees for work that consistently demonstrates outstanding individual or group performance. The Department may also recognize citizens who perform acts of exemplary service to the community or to the Department.

1045.3 AWARD BOARDS

1. The Chief shall authorize an Awards Board to receive and evaluate recommendations for awards. This Board shall determine whether an award should be presented and, if so, which award would be appropriate.
2. The Board shall consist of seven members and will represent a cross-section of Departmental ranks and duty assignments.
3. If a vacancy occurs on the Awards Board, the Committee Chair will select a new member while maintaining the cross representation of the Departmental ranks and duty assignments.
4. Member will serve three year terms with two members rotating off the board each year.
5. Members who serve a three year term are eligible for the Special Service Award.
6. If a Board member is under consideration for an award, that member shall be excused from the Board for the period when this award is under consideration. The Chief may appoint an ad hoc member to the Board of appropriate rank to serve on the Board in place of the member being considered for the period indicated.

1045.4 RECOGNIZED AWARDS FOR SWORN PERSONNEL

The Vancouver Police Department recognizes the following awards for issuance to sworn personnel:

- A. Medal of Honor
- B. Medal of Valor
- C. Silver Star Medal
- D. Medal of Distinction
- E. Purple Heart
- F. Lifesaving Award

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- G. Career Service Medal
- H. Meritorious Service Award
- I. Special Service Award
- J. Team Commendation
- K. Certificate of Department Recognition
- L. Divisional Recognition

1045.4.1 MEDAL OF HONOR

The Medal of Honor is Washington State's highest award for law enforcement per RCW 41.72.020. It is awarded to Departmental members killed in the line of duty or displaying exemplary meritorious conduct. All nominations shall be forwarded to the Washington State Law Enforcement Medal of Honor Committee and shall be in accordance with all policies and procedures set forth.

This award consists of a medal, ribbon bar, and a certificate.

1045.4.2 MEDAL OF VALOR

The Medal of Valor is the highest award presented by the Vancouver Police Department, and is awarded to officers who distinguish themselves conspicuously by gallantry and extraordinary heroism. Usually, such an act must be in excess of normal demands and of such a nature that the member was fully aware of the imminent threat to their personal safety and acted above and beyond the call of duty at the risk of their own life.

This award consists of a medal, ribbon bar, and a certificate.

1045.4.3 SILVER STAR

The Silver Star is the second highest award presented by the Vancouver Police Department, and is awarded to officers who display technical skill, courageous action, or significant bravery during a dangerous or life-threatening incident. These acts of courage do not rise to the level of risk as required for the Medal of Valor, but are actions of bravery well beyond normal expectation.

This award consists of a medal, ribbon bar, and a certificate.

1045.4.4 MEDAL OF DISTINCTION

A Medal of Distinction is awarded for outstanding performance beyond the ordinary course of duty during hazardous situations. The officer must demonstrate alertness, perseverance, or timely judgment in the performance of a difficult task which results in the protection of life, the recovery of stolen property, the prevention or solving of a major crime, or the apprehension of an armed or dangerous person. The action of the officer must be truly exemplary, as opposed to competent and professional.

This award consists of a medal, ribbon bar, and a certificate.

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1045.4.5 PURPLE HEART

The Purple Heart is awarded to officers who receive substantial bodily harm inflicted by an assailant while the officer was in the performance of their duty. The injury must not be the result of, or concurrent with, and the conduct of the officer that is less than acceptable by all standards.

The award consists of a medal, ribbon bar, and a certificate.

1045.4.6 LIFESAVING AWARD

The Lifesaving Award is given to an officer who is directly responsible for the saving of a human life. Documentation and supporting evidence, which may include statements of witnesses, physicians, or supervisors, must be included to substantiate the award. This award is also appropriate in those circumstances where the action of an officer prolonged human life to the extent of the victim being released to the care of medical authorities, even though the victim may have expired at a later time. This award is appropriate for officers who prevent the taking of a life by a suicidal subject through imminent and violent means.

This award consists of a medal, a ribbon bar, and a certificate.

1045.4.7 CAREER SERVICE MEDAL

The Career Service Medal is awarded to officers who complete at least 20 years of active civilian law enforcement service, of which at least 15 years were served with the Vancouver Police Department. This medal is presented to eligible sworn officers.

This award consists of a medal and a certificate.

1045.4.8 MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD

The Meritorious Service Award is given to an officer for very competent and professional performance. This award recognizes an officer that performed competently in a stressful situation, in a stress position over an extended period of time, or that performed duties beyond normal expectations in the investigation and case preparation of an unusual or special case.

This award consists of a ribbon bar and a certificate.

1045.4.9 SPECIAL SERVICE AWARD

A Special Service Award is presented to an officer that has performed competently and with merit in a collateral assignment as a member of a specialized Department unit or training unit instructor for three (3) or more years. A Department Supervisor or Unit Team leader of the specialized unit will be responsible for nominating an eligible employee.

This award consists of a ribbon bar and a certificate.

1045.4.10 TEAM COMMENDATION

A Team Commendation is presented to a group of officers, civilian personnel and/or citizens whose collective efforts significantly impact the overall service delivery for the Vancouver Police Department.

This award consists of a ribbon bar and a certificate.

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1045.4.11 CERTIFICATE OF DEPARTMENTAL RECOGNITION

A Certificate of Department Recognition may be awarded to an officer who is responsible for improving the conditions within the Department or the community. This award may be presented for the performance of noteworthy achievements, special services, or the completion of special duties or projects. Such acts shall be evaluated on the basis of being above and beyond normal job requirements, but to a lesser degree than required for a medal award.

This award consists of a certificate placed in the officer's personnel file.

1045.4.12 DIVISIONAL RECOGNITION

Divisional Recognition is presented to an officer for outstanding performance of duty. It may be awarded for performance over a period of time, or for contributing to the success of a project or program. This award may be presented by any supervisor or command member directly to the officer.

This award consists of a memorandum placed in the officer's divisional file.

1045.4.13 AWARD RIBBONS

Members may wear up to six (6) of their highest earned award ribbons on the Class 'A' or Class 'B' uniform shirt. Ribbon bars will be worn centered one quarter inch (1/4") above the name plate on the uniform shirt and arranged by highest order of precedence from left to right, as viewed from the front. Multiple ribbons shall be mounted on an appropriately sized ribbon mounting bar.

These awards should be displayed in the order listed below from the highest to the lowest:

1. State Medal of Honor
2. Medal of Valor
3. Silver Star Medal
4. Medal of Distinction
5. Purple Heart
6. Life Saving Award
7. Career Service Medal
8. Meritorious Service Award
9. Special Service Award
10. Team Commendation

1045.5 RECOGNIZED AWARDS FOR CIVILIAN PERSONNEL

The Vancouver Police Department recognizes the following awards for issuance to civilian personnel:

- A. Department Citation
- B. Lifesaving Award

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C. Certificate of Department Recognition

D. Supervisory Recognition

E. Team Commendation

1045.5.1 DEPARTMENT CITATION

A Department Citation is awarded to non-sworn members of the Department for competent and professional service. This award recognizes employees that performed with extreme competence in a stressful position over an extended period of time. The Department Citation may also be awarded for extreme professionalism or competency in an unusual or hazardous situation.

This award consists of a medal, ribbon bar, and certificate.

1045.5.2 LIFESAVING AWARD

The Lifesaving Award is given to an employee who is directly responsible for the saving of a human life. Documentation and supporting evidence, that may include statements of witnesses, physicians, or supervisors, must be included to substantiate the award. This award is also appropriate in those circumstances where the actions of an employee prolonged human life to the extent of the victim being released to the care of medical authorities, even though the victim may have expired at a later time.

This award consists of a medal, a ribbon bar, and a certificate.

1045.5.3 CERTIFICATE OF DEPARTMENT RECOGNITION

A Certificate of Department Recognition may be awarded to an employee who is responsible for improving the conditions within the Department or community. This award may be presented for the performance of noteworthy achievements, special services, or the completion of special duties or projects. Such acts shall be evaluated on the basis of being above and beyond normal job requirements, but to a lesser degree than required for a medal award.

This award consists of a certificate placed in the employee's personnel file.

1045.5.4 SUPERVISORY RECOGNITION

Supervisory Recognition is awarded to an employee for outstanding performance of their duties. It may be presented for performance over a period of time, or for contributing to the success of a project or program. This award may be presented by any supervisor directly to the employee.

This award consists of a memorandum placed in the employee's divisional file.

1045.5.5 TEAM COMMENDATION

A Team Commendation is presented to a group of officers, civilian personnel and/or citizens whose collective efforts significantly impact the overall service delivery for the Vancouver Police Department.

This award consists of a ribbon bar and a certificate.

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1045.6 RECOGNIZED AWARDS FOR CITIZENS

The Vancouver Police Department recognizes the following awards for issuance to citizens:

- A. Department Citation
- B. Lifesaving Award
- C. Certificate of Department Recognition
- D. Citizen Recognition
- E. Team Commendation

1045.6.1 DEPARTMENT CITATION

A Department Citation is awarded to a citizen for bravery in coming to the aid of an officer or another citizen. The actions of the citizen must be exemplary and must not needlessly place self or others at risk. This award may also be presented to a citizen, a group, or an organization that has committed substantial time, effort, or assistance to the Vancouver Police Department to further the goals and ideals of the Department.

This award consists of a plaque and a certificate.

1045.6.2 LIFESAVING AWARD

The Lifesaving Award is given to a citizen that is directly responsible for the saving of a human life. Documentation and supporting evidence, that may include statements of witnesses, physicians, or supervisors, must be included to substantiate the award. This award is also appropriate in those circumstances where the actions of the citizen prolonged human life to the extent of the victim being released to the care of medical authorities, even though the victim may have expired at a later time.

This award consists of a plaque and a certificate.

1045.6.3 CERTIFICATE OF DEPARTMENT RECOGNITION

A Certificate of Department Recognition is awarded to a citizen, group, or organization that is responsible for improving relations with the Department and the community.

This award consists of a certificate.

1045.6.4 CITIZEN RECOGNITION

Citizen Recognition is awarded to a civilian for their contribution to the success of a project or program, or for significant actions taken in support of law enforcement or safety in the community.

This award consists of a memorandum.

1045.6.5 TEAM COMMENDATION

A Team Commendation is presented to a group of officers, civilian personnel and/or citizens whose collective efforts significantly impact the overall service delivery for the Vancouver Police Department.

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This award consists of a ribbon bar and a certificate.

1045.7 RETIREMENT AWARDS

1. Officers retiring in good standing, whether for service or disability, with 15 years or more of combined law enforcement service, will be issued retirement credentials as listed in VPD Policy 1002 at no cost.

2. Recognizing that law enforcement service at a prior agency is valuable, the retiring member may, at their expense, furnish badges from their previous department for inclusion in any retirement presentation.

3. Officers retiring in good standing under disability conditions, either duty or non-duty, with less than 15 years of law enforcement service will be issued retirement credentials as listed in VPD Policy 1002 at no cost.

1045.8 PROCEDURES FOR RECOMMENDATION OF AWARD

1. Any Department member may recommend another officer, another employee, or a citizen as a candidate for departmental recognition, with the exception of the Special Service Award, which must be submitted by a Unit Leader or Department Supervisor.

a) Vancouver Police Officers as defined by RCW 10.93.020, or police canines as identified in RCW 4.24.41, are eligible for awards designated for sworn personnel.

b) Employees of the City of Vancouver, assigned to the Vancouver Police Department, are eligible for awards designated for civilian personnel.

c) All recommendations for Departmental awards shall be submitted in writing and include a thorough description of the circumstances.

[See attachment: 1045 Department Awards Nomination Form.pdf](#)

d) Recommendations should be submitted to the committee within 90 days of the nominated action, but all nominations will be reviewed when they are received.

e) Recommendations for awards other than Divisional Recognition shall be forwarded to the Awards Board through the normal chain of command.

f) Each level of command will review the recommendations, adding concurrence or disagreement, and the reasons supporting their comments, in writing.

g) The Awards Board shall meet as needed, or as directed by the Chief of Police, to consider recommendations. The Board may make any one of the following findings:

- 1) The recommendation meets the standards for the award and the award is approved;
- 2) The circumstances justify recognition, but for an award other than that specified in the initial recommendation;

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- 3) The facts as currently known do not justify an award at this time.
 - h) A majority vote by the committee members shall decide the recommendation.
 - i) The Board will present a written report to the Chief of its recommendations.
 - j) No awards shall be approved for actions that violate Department policies and procedures.
2. A final determination on all levels of Departmental recognition will be made by the Office of the Chief.

1045.9 PROCEDURE FOR PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

1. Presentation of Departmental awards involving a medal or ribbon bar will be made at the next regularly scheduled recognition ceremony unless the Board, or the Chief, or his/her designee determines it necessary to schedule an additional ceremony. Certificates of Recognition and other supervisory recognition may also be presented at the formal ceremony at the discretion of the Chief or designee.
2. All Department members receiving departmental recognition shall have a copy of the certificate, memorandum, and/or letter placed in their personnel file.