

**SAN MARCOS POLICE DEPARTMENT  
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL**

**Section Title:** Awards

**General Order:** 606

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**Issuing Authority:** *Howard E. Williams*  
**Howard E. Williams, Chief of Police**

**I. POLICY**

The judicious issuance of awards can enhance employee incentive, initiative and morale. Conversely, the overuse or misuse of such awards can denigrate their value and meaning. The prompt nomination, review, recommendation and issuance of awards is essential to the credibility of the process and the importance of the awards.

**II. PURPOSE**

The purpose of General Order 606 is to define the types of awards and the qualifications for each, and to provide guidelines for the nomination of awards, a review process for nominations, and the issuance of awards.

**III. CLASSIFICATION OF AWARDS**

- A. Police Medal of Honor – The Medal of Honor is presented for acts of heroism obviously beyond the call of duty and performed under imminent risk of life or serious bodily injury.
- B. Police Cross – The Police Cross is awarded when an officer loses his or her life in the performance of duty under honorable circumstances.
- C. Police Commendation Medal – The Police Commendation Medal is awarded for outstanding work involving great personal risk, or an act of such nature as to bring honor and recognition to the employee and to the Police Department.
- D. Life Saving Medal – The Life Saving Medal is awarded for the saving of a human life, which may have been lost had the recipient not intervened. The award recognizes acts of extraordinary emergency aid. This medal may be awarded in connection with any other award, if facts so indicate.
- E. Distinguished Service Award – The Distinguished Service Award is awarded for excellence in police work.
  - 1. The Distinguished Service Award may be awarded to any employee who demonstrates outstanding and superior performance on any assignment over a period of at least one year, but only to those employees whose performance of duties is clearly exceptional.
  - 2. The Distinguished Service Award may be awarded to any employee for meritorious deeds of a nature that does not qualify for higher awards, but is not to be given in conjunction with any other award.

3. The Distinguished Service Award may be awarded to any law enforcement officer (including other agencies), civilian employees, or citizen for outstanding contributions to law enforcement or for outstanding public service, which have significantly enhanced the success of a difficult police or community project.
- F. Purple Heart – The Purple Heart may be conferred for suffering serious bodily injury or death in the line of duty under honorable circumstances that brought favorable recognition to the employee and to the Department.
  - G. Proficiency Achievement Awards – The Proficiency Achievement Award is awarded to officers and Emergency Communications Operators (ECO) who have achieved intermediate, advanced, or masters certifications.
  - H. Police Service Bars – The Police Service Bar represents four years of continuous service as a commissioned peace officer certified by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Standards and Education (TCLEOSE) or as an ECO certified by the Texas Department of Public Safety.
    1. Peace Officers
      - a. Continuous service allows for absence from service (not employed as a full-time commissioned peace officer) not exceeding one year, but the time absent will be deducted from the compilation of service time.
      - b. Any suspension time will be deducted from compilation of service time.
      - c. The probationary year is included as a completed service year for officers not previously certified, and it begins on the date of certification from TCLEOSE.
      - d. Officers certified before employment with the City of San Marcos may compute time for the service bar from the date the officer received certification by TCLEOSE and was first commissioned as a full time peace officer, less any absence not exceeding one year.
    2. Emergency Communications Operators certified previous to employment with the City of San Marcos may compute time for service bars from the date the operator received certification by TCLEOSE and was first employed as a full time communications operator, less any absence not to exceed one year.
  - I. Education Ribbon – A ribbon awarded for academic achievement in obtaining an associates degree, a bachelor’s degree, a master’s degree, a terminal degree, and a doctorate degree.

**IV. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AWARDS**

- A. Any employee may nominate any other employee he believes to be deserving of an award. Suggestions regarding awards may be received from any source.
- B. Awards must be given for specific exceptional performance, may not be automatic, and will always be considered on an individual basis apart from any previous award or precedent.

- C. The Department encourages and recognizes those citizens whose actions contribute to the apprehension of criminals, the prevention of crime, the safety of the community, or who provide significant assistance to the Department.
- D. The Department Secretary will track all commendations and awards.
- E. All Department personnel have a duty to report the exceptional service or conduct of employees and citizens. Any employee recommending another employee or a citizen for an award will submit a written recommendation to the Awards Committee chairperson, who will forward the recommendation to the Awards Committee.
- G. The Awards Committee consists of nine employees, all of whom are voluntary, who will serve two-year term positions. The employees will consist of one Sergeant, who will serve as chair; the Community Services Sergeant; two employees each from the Patrol and Administration Divisions; one employee each from the Investigations and Community Services Divisions and the Department's representative to the City Awards Committee.
- H. Employees may serve consecutive terms without limitation.
- I. Duties of the Awards Committee include:
  - 1. Arranging and attending committee meetings;
  - 2. Reviewing and evaluating nominations;
  - 3. Prioritizing nominations; and
  - 4. Making preparations for the annual awards ceremony.

**V. EVALUATION BY AWARDS COMMITTEE**

- A. The Awards Committee will evaluate and investigate each recommendation and determine the appropriate award. The Committee will then forward its recommendation to the Chief of Police for final decision.
- B. Copies of all relevant paperwork pertaining to awards/commendations received will be maintained in the respective employee's personnel file.
  - 1. Nomination forms are available, but recommendations may be submitted in any form, provided they are legible.
  - 2. Written nominations may recommend the type of award, but the final award is determined by the Awards Committee with the approval of the Chief of Police.
  - 3. Nominations for acts, deeds or accomplishments in the previous calendar year will be evaluated.
- C. The Chief of Police will present awards at any time he feels necessary and appropriate to the nature of the award and its timely presentation, but awards will usually be presented annually in a formal ceremony.

**VI. MEDALS**

- A. Department issued medals may also be worn to any Department sponsored function when the wearing of the class A uniform is authorized.
- B. The Awards Committee, subject to the Chief's approval, will select the styles of medals, colors of the corresponding bars, and styles of plaques and certificates.

## **VII. MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARDS**

- A. The Department will recognize the meritorious service of employees who resign, retire, or who, under honorable conditions, become unable to continue employment.
- B. Any employee who retires or resigns in good standing after ten (10) years of continuous service with the Department, or any employee who retires or resigns prior to his fifth anniversary for medical reasons will be recognized.
- C. Employees whose employment is terminated by death will be recognized posthumously.
- D. Other persons may be recognized for contributions to the City or Department at the discretion of the Chief.
- E. The appropriate Assistant Chief, in cooperation with the Human Resources Department, will determine length of service with the Department and initiate appropriate meritorious service recognition ceremonies.
- F. Employees who resign or retire in good standing with ten (10) or more years of continuous service with the Department, or who retire or resign for medical reasons, may be recognized at a ceremony in their honor. In addition to the ceremony, the following gifts may be awarded:
  - 1. Sworn Employees: Shadow box with the badges of their rank.
  - 2. Non-Sworn Employees: Plaque and clock with Department seal
- G. The family of an employee who is recognized posthumously will be presented a plaque at a ceremony in honor of the late employee. The plaque will contain the badge of the rank of commissioned employees, or an engraved Department seal for non-commissioned employees.
- H. Employees who complete 20, 25, 30 or more years of continuous service with the Department will be recognized at a ceremony in their honor with a reception hosted by the Department on a date close to the anniversary of their hire date.
- I. Employees with 10 or 15 years of continuous service will be acknowledged with longevity service awards at the Employees' Appreciation Dinner.