



HARFORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE PERSONNEL POLICY

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Sheriff

Awards Review Committee / Awards Submission

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1. Purpose

To establish guidelines for the Awards Review Committee and procedures for awards submissions.

2. Policy

Harford County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) will officially recognize and record outstanding performance by an employee or a group of employees.

3. Definitions

AWARDS BOARD COORDINATOR (ABC): the Director of the Office of Media & Public Relations will assist the Awards Review Committee (ARC) in the review, processing, and presentation of nominations and the facilitation of the presentation of awards.

AWARDS REVIEW COMMITTEE (ARC): a permanent body made up of a chairman and four members. The ARC will meet as necessary to review nominations for specific awards.

AWARDS REVIEW PANEL (ARP): a panel consisting of the Chief Deputy and the Sheriff; responsible for deciding discrepancies unable to be resolved by the ARC.

4. Procedures

A. Awards Review Committee (ARC)

1. The ARC will consist of five members including a Bureau Chief from each bureau and one non-voting member.
 - a. Services & Support Bureau Chief (chairman)
 - b. Police Operations Bureau Chief (vice-chairman)
 - c. Correctional Services Bureau Chief
 - d. Investigative Services Bureau Chief
 - e. Director, Office of Media & Public Relations (Awards Board Coordinator) (non-voting)

2. The committee will meet as necessary, at the discretion of the Chairman.
 3. The selection of commendations, awards, or honors by the ARC will be based upon the guidelines for the individual award.
 - a. The ARC will be the sole judge as to the meaning, interpretation, and applicability of the guidelines to a recommendation for an award.
 - b. The ARC may reject, accept, upgrade, or downgrade a recommendation for an award.
 - c. The ARC will consider the duty assignment, the requirements of the assignment, the specialty of the nominee, and the performance expected and required of the nominee when deliberating an award recommendation.
 4. All deliberations of the committee will be confidential. The chairman will report the ARC's recommendations to the Chief Deputy who will present the information to the Sheriff. The findings will include dissenting opinions when the committee's decision to grant or deny an award is not unanimous.
 5. If there are concerns regarding an award that is unable to be resolved by the ARC, the issue(s) will be forwarded to an ARP for resolution.
 6. The ARC will provide a disposition (approved or disapproved) on each nomination to:
 - a. The nominee's Division Commander;
 - b. The person recommending the award;
 - c. The Agency member involved; and
 - d. Human Resources.
- B. Recommendations to the ARC
1. Commanders will initiate documentation to recognize outstanding performance; however, any HCSO employee can submit a recommendation to the appropriate commander, who will review the submission for completeness and add a concurring or dissenting endorsement.
 2. All recommendations to the ARC will be in a Sheriff's Office Awards Packet and will contain the following:
 - a. Initial Awards Tracking Form ([SO-70A](#));
 - b. A complete detailed description of the incident and specific actions taken by each employee(s) presented on individual Awards Nomination Comment Forms ([SO-70B](#)) (one per nominated employee);
 - c. Copies of reports related to the incident;

- d. Statements from witnesses or other interested parties;
 - e. Opinions of witnesses present during the incident, if the employee's life was at risk in the performance of his actions;
 - f. Opinions of a medical professional such as the attending physician if the employee's actions contributed to saving a life;
 - g. The duty status of the employee at the time of the incident;
 - h. Whether the action was routine or beyond the recognized limits of duty;
 - i. A recommendation for the specific award for each nominee;
 - j. A draft narrative, prepared on a separate Awards Nomination Comment Forms ([SO-70B](#)), to be included on the award certificate that is no longer than 150 words and accurately, effectively, and particularly describes the awardees actions (one per nominee); and
 - k. Indorsements from the chain of command supporting the nomination for each nominee.
3. Recommendations will be submitted as soon as possible after the occurrence of the noteworthy event to the ARC Coordinator during the quarter in which it occurred, unless otherwise authorized by the ARC Coordinator.
 4. The draft narrative for the award certificate will, in addition to 2(j) above, be emailed to the ABC when the Awards Packet is forwarded through the chain of command. A hard copy should be sent to the ABC, as well.
 5. An employee's actions during an incident may merit more than one award; however, only the highest award available fitting the prescribed criteria will be given.
 6. One Sheriff's Office Award Packet will be submitted per incident or event and may contain separate nominations for multiple nominees.
 7. All nominations for the preceding year must be submitted to the ARC by January 15th for submission to the Sheriff by February 1st. Recommendations submitted after one year of the event, absent extenuating circumstances as determined by the ARC chairman, will be denied.
 8. When completing the award nomination paperwork, the excessive use of superlatives is not encouraged.
- C. Disqualification of Award Nomination
1. The following circumstances will exclude a member from being awarded any commendation:
 - a. If the member's actions were in violation of Agency rules and regulations, such violation was likely to cause injury to the deputy or others;

- b. If the deputy's actions deliberately or ineptly caused an escalation of a particular incident to the point the deputy or others were placed in jeopardy, caused firearms to be used, caused injury to other persons who were uninvolved, or caused a more critical situation to arise as a result of the deputy's actions;
- c. If the action by the deputy was in direct violation of an order by a superior officer, without good cause for the violation of the order given;
- d. If the deputy violated a direct order of a superior officer without valid reason and became involved in a serious situation as a result of that violation;
- e. If the deputy's duty assignment requires the performance of dangerous and hazardous tasks specific to that assignment unless the deputy's performance is above and beyond the call of duty;
- f. If the official report or other documentation does not substantiate the recommendation for an award or does not specifically identify exactly what a nominee did;
- g. If the deputy was not successful in completing his objective even though he was physically able to do so;
- h. If the deputy exposed himself/herself to danger without due care;
- i. If the deputy irresponsibly endangered the life of anyone by his actions or caused injury to innocent, uninvolved persons; or
- j. If the deputy's actions were specifically directed by rules and regulations that would have resulted in disciplinary action, had he not followed those rules and regulations.

D. Deputy and Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year Award

1. Commanders will evaluate nominations for Deputy and Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year and forward their selections to the respective Bureau Chief, as outlined in B(2) above, by January 15th of each year. **At least one nomination per Bureau is required.**
2. The following is the maximum number of nominations allowed for each of the two categories: Exceptions may be considered by the ARC Chairperson.
 - a. Sheriff's Staff Units - 1
 - b. Services & Support Bureau - 3
 - (1) Court Services Division - 1
 - (2) Administrative Services Division - 1
 - (3) Services and Support Staff - 1
 - c. Police Operations Bureau - 4
 - (1) Northern Precinct - 1
 - (2) Southern Precinct - 1

- (3) Special Operations Division - 1
- (4) Community Services Division - 1

d. Investigative Services Bureau - 2

- (1) Criminal Investigations Division - 1
- (2) Special Investigations Division – 1

e. Correctional Services Bureau - 2

- (1) Operations Division - 1
- (2) Support Division - 1

E. Awards to Members of Allied Agencies.

1. On occasion, members from other jurisdictions have participated in the apprehension of dangerous felons while on or off-duty within Harford County, as well as become involved in joint endeavors with the Harford County Sheriff's Office. Therefore, members from other agencies may be recommended for any HCSO award by any member of the Agency.
2. Such nominations will be considered by the ARC using the same standards and criteria employed in deliberating commendations for members of the HCSO.
3. Members from other jurisdictions receiving an award will receive a certificate issued for the appropriate award and the citation bar, if applicable.

F. Preparation of Awards

1. The ARC Chairman will be responsible for the preparation of all certificates and awards issued by the Sheriff.
2. The ARC Chairman, with the concurrence of the Sheriff, will determine when formal ceremonies are held.
3. Commanders will be responsible for the presentation of local awards.
4. Copies of all awards described in this policy will be placed in the employee's personnel file.

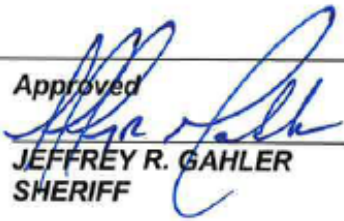
G. Approval and Distribution of Ribbons, Medals, and Insignia Pins

1. Ribbons, medals, and insignia pins will be presented to recipients during the Awards Ceremony Program.
2. Only those pins and ribbons issued by the Agency may be worn, unless specifically approved by the Sheriff.
3. Suggestions for new ribbons, medals or insignia pins must be submitted to the ARC for approval. The criteria and design must accompany the request for approval.

- H. Awards presented throughout the year will be recognized in the Awards Ceremony Program; they will not be presented again at the Agency Ceremony.
- I. Award nominations and copies of certificates presented will be provided to the Human Resources Director for inclusion in the nominee's personnel file.

5. Summary of Changes

- A. On 02/09/24 a three-year review was conducted with the following edits:
 - 1. Nominations submitted to the Sheriff by February 1st was moved from 4.D.2 to 4.B.7; and
 - 2. Added : Section 4.D.1. At least one nomination per Bureau is required.

Approved

JEFFREY R. GAHLER
SHERIFF
DATE 2.26.24