

Rules and Procedures

Rule 305

April 17, 1992

Rule 305 - AWARDS

This rule is issued to establish the system by which the Department rewards sworn and civilian members for outstanding performance. It is effective immediately, superseding all previously issued rules, orders, bulletins, and other directives regarding awards given by the Department.

Sec. 1.0 GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS: One of the most important ways in which the Police Department establishes policy is through rewards. The most meaningful way the department can say that a certain kind of behavior is important is to reward people who engage in that behavior.

Traditionally, rewarding police officers fairly and equitably has been extremely difficult. Most awards in the past have been given for single acts of heroism, a practice which fails to take into account the many police officers who consistently do good work but never happen upon that unique situation requiring conspicuous bravery.

The system of awards set forth in this rule is designed to encourage the department to consistently recognize and reward the kinds of behavior that are the basis of high quality police service.

Sec. 2.0 ACTIONS FOR WHICH AWARDS ARE GIVEN: The Department will give awards for exemplary performance in a variety of categories, among them:

Extraordinary Bravery in Performance of Duty

Meritorious Police Service, for example:

Identification of criminal offenders and criminal activity

Apprehension of offenders

Crime prevention activities

Assisting individuals in danger of physical harm

Protecting constitutional rights of individuals or groups

Traffic services

Assisting people who cannot care for themselves

Resolving group conflicts , such as family trouble and tenant-landlord disputes

Identifying potentially serious law enforcement or governmental problems

Providing extraordinary community service

Exceptional Service to the Department, for example:

Responsible for innovative suggestions for improvement in department functions or skillful implementation of new programs

Exemplary Proficiency, for example:

Skill in the use of firearms

Driving skill

Sec. 3.0 AVAILABLE AWARDS: There are a number of department awards available for different types of commendable behavior all of which are made through the process established in this rule.

Sec. 3.1 The Letter of Commendation is the basic award of the department and must be awarded before higher awards can be made. It is given for actions that, in the context of the particular district or unit, are exemplary or exceptional.

When awarded at the district or unit level, by the District or Unit Awards Board, the Letter is signed by the Chairman of that Board and an original copy is given to the commended officer.

The Letter of Commendation is issued also in conjunction with all higher awards given by the Department Awards Board. In such cases, it reiterates the reasons for the award and is signed by the Police Commissioner.

The letter is typewritten on standard Boston Police letterhead.

A copy of every Letter of Commendation will be place in the commended Officer's personnel file.

Sec. 3.2 The Certificate of Commendation is given by the Department Awards Board for actions that are outstanding, even when compared to similar actions Department-wide. It is signed by the Police Commissioner as is the Letter of Commendation that accompanies and explains it.

Sec. 3.3 The William J. Taylor Meritorious Service Award is the highest award available other than those awarded for valor and heroism. It is given once a year at the Annual Awards Presentation Ceremony to distinguish a member whose performance over the previous year is in the highest traditions of Boston Police service. The award is given to one officer per year, upon the recommendation of the Department Awards Board. It is accompanied by a Letter of Commendation from the Commissioner explaining the reasons for the award.

Sec. 3.4 The Medal of Honor is given once a year at the Annual Awards Presentation Ceremony to officers cited for outstanding valor in situations occurring during the previous year. The medal is awarded upon recommendation of the Department Awards Board and is accompanied by a Letter of Commendation from the Commissioner setting forth the reasons for the award.

Sec. 3.5 The Detective Thomas J. Gill Memorial Medal of Honor will be awarded once a year at the Annual Awards Presentation Ceremony to officers cited for outstanding valor in situations occurring in the previous year. The medal is awarded upon recommendation of the Department Awards Board and is accompanied by a Letter of Commendation from the Commissioner setting forth the reasons for the award.

Sec. 3.6 The Detective Sherman C. Griffiths Memorial Medal of Honor will be awarded once a year at the Annual Awards Presentation Ceremony to officers cited for outstanding valor in situations occurring in the previous year. The medal is awarded upon recommendation of the Department Awards Board and is accompanied by a Letter of Commendation from the Commissioner setting forth the reasons for the award.

Sec. 3.7 The Detective Roy J. Sergei Memorial Medal of Honor will be awarded once a year at the Annual Awards Presentation Ceremony to officers cited for outstanding valor in situations occurring in the previous year. The medal is awarded upon recommendation of the Department Awards Board and is accompanied by a Letter of Commendation from the Commissioner setting forth the reasons for the award.

Sec. 3.8 The Police Officer Louis H. Metaxas Memorial Medal of Honor will be awarded once a year at the Annual Awards Presentation Ceremony to officers cited for outstanding valor in situations occurring in the previous year. The medal is awarded upon recommendation of the Department Awards Board and is accompanied by a Letter of Commendation from the Commissioner setting forth the reasons for the award.

Sec. 3.9 The Police Officer Jeremiah J. Hurley Memorial Medal of Honor will be awarded once a year at the Annual Awards Presentation Ceremony to officers cited for outstanding valor in situations occurring in the previous year. The medal is awarded upon recommendation of the Department Awards Board is accompanied by a Letter of Commendation from the Commissioner setting forth the reasons for the award.

Sec. 3.10 The Mayor's Medal of Excellence was established on June 26, 1989 by the Police Commissioner. It is awarded annually at the Annual Awards Presentation Ceremony to a police

officer or officers who, in the previous year, distinguished themselves and are judged for the highest form of superior merit in any form of police duties.

Sec. 3.11 The Walter Scott Medal is awarded once a year at the Annual Awards Presentation Ceremony to distinguish an officer for valorous conduct in some situation during the previous year. Ordinarily, it is awarded to only one officer a year; however, upon recommendation of the Department Awards Board, more than one medal may be awarded. This should be the case only when the medal is being awarded to officers whose conduct in the same situation was equally valorous. The medal is accompanied by a Letter of Commendation from the Commissioner setting forth the reasons for the award.

Sec. 3.12 The Schroeder Brothers Memorial Medal is the highest award given by the Department. It is awarded once a year at the Annual Awards Presentation Ceremony to an officer whose conduct in some situation is judged by the Department Awards Board to be the highest form of valor exhibited by an officer during the previous year. It is awarded to only one officer a year and is accompanied by a Letter of Commendation from the Commissioner setting forth the reasons for the award. Because this award is the highest recognition of valor which the department can make it may not be awarded every year but will be reserved for those particular acts of valor which are outstanding.

Sec. 3.13 Special Citations, when appropriate, are given at the Annual Awards Presentation Ceremony to members of the department or other persons whose conduct is laudable but who are not eligible to receive other awards. Citations are awarded upon recommendation of the Department Awards board and are accompanied by a Letter of Commendation from the Commissioner setting forth the reasons for the citation.

Each recipient of a specific department award shall receive an insignia which shall be distinctive for each type of award. This bar, or insignia, shall be worn over the right breast pocket of the uniform shirt or jacket.

Sec. 3.14 Life Saving Award, when appropriate, to be awarded at the Annual Awards Presentation Ceremony to a police officer or officers whose actions either valorous or otherwise prevent a life to be lost i.e. fire, drowning or cardiac arrest. The Life Saving Award is awarded upon recommendations of the Department Awards Board and is accompanied by a Letter of Commendation from the Commissioner setting for the reasons for the award.

Sec. 4.0 PROCEDURES FOR RECOMMENDING AWARDS: Recommendations for awards may be made by anyone in or out of the Department. All recommendations must be submitted on BPD Form #1645, Recommendation for Commendation, to the District of Unit Board having jurisdiction over the officer being recommended.

Recommendations originating outside the Department will be transferred onto Form #1645 by the Chairman of the Unit Board and submitted to the Board for consideration. At the same

time, copies of the letter commending the officer will be forwarded to him and to his personnel file.

Recommendations originating from within the Department will be submitted on Form #1645.

In considering recommendation for commendation, each Unit Board will review all available reports and, as necessary, interview persons who can shed additional light on the recommendation. Once the Board has fully considered a recommendation, it may decline to commend the member's action or it may issue a Letter of Commendation. If a letter is awarded, the Unit Board may also forward the case to the Chairman of the Department Awards Board to be considered for a higher award.

The Department Board, also in making its evaluations, will explore all available sources of information. The Board has three options. It may reject the recommendation or, as an immediate action, may choose to award a Certificate of Commendation from the Commissioner. The Board may choose to delay action and consider the recommendation for one of the annual awards. If it does so and the recommendation is not accepted for an annual award a Certificate of Commendation may still be given.

Before the Annual Awards Presentation Ceremony the Department Awards Board will meet and consider all remaining recommendations for higher awards those recommendations that have not either been rejected nor received Certificates of Commendation. Those that do not receive annual awards may, at the discretion of the board, be awarded Certificates or discarded.

Sec. 5.0 DISTRICT AND UNIT AWARDS BOARD: There will be two separate levels of review to process recommendations for awards. The first level will be composed of the Commanding Officer of the district or unit (Chairman), one sergeant, one detective, two patrolmen, one representative of the Boston Police Superior Officers Federation, and one representative of the Boston Police Patrolmen's Association. In Units employing a significant number of civilians, a civilian will be included in the Awards Board. Boards representing an entire Bureau may be chaired by a designee of the Superintendent. Boards are hereby established in the following units.

AREA A: Criminal Investigation Section

AREA B: Housing Patrol Unit

AREA C: Administrative Services Bureau

AREA D: Investigative Services Bureau

AREA E: Commissioner's Office
Bureau of Field Services (Headquarters)

The persons who will sit on the Area or Units Awards Board, except for those appointed by the Superior Officers Federation and the Patrolmen's Association, will be elected by their constituencies once a year (in January) or as vacancies occur. Area of Unit Awards Boards will meet once monthly to review and act upon all recommendations for commendations received since the previous meeting. The decisions and recommendations of each Area or Unit Awards Boards will be made by consensus when possible or by a vote when necessary. All members of the Board will enjoy equal status in voting.

The Chairman of each such Board is responsible for seeing that elections take place as necessary and for scheduling and coordinating monthly meetings as required. He will also ensure that the decisions and recommendations of the Board are acted upon and that all appropriate reports and forms are routed to their proper destinations.

Sec. 6.0 DEPARTMENT AWARDS BOARD: The Department Awards Board will meet quarterly to act upon all recommendations submitted for its review since its last meeting. Only recommendations submitted by the Area or Unit Awards Boards will be considered.

The Department Awards Board will be composed of the Superintendent of the Bureau of Field Services, or his designee, as Chairperson; a Deputy Superintendent from the Bureau of Professional Standards and Development; a representative from the Internal Affairs Division; a representative from the Office of the Police Commissioner; and three field Area/District Commanders appointed by the Police Commissioner to serve for a period of one year.

The decisions and recommendations of the Department Awards Board will be made by consensus when possible or by a vote when necessary. All members of the Board will enjoy equal status in voting.

The Chairman of the Department Awards Board will schedule and preside over the quarterly meetings and will ensure that all recommendations properly submitted for its review are acted upon expeditiously. He will ensure also that the decisions of the Department Awards Board are carried out.

Awards that are worn over the right breast pocket shall be worn in a consistent manner. The highest award shall be worn closest to the heart, in rows of three, with the highest awards on top. To establish a hierarchy, the medals shall be worn in a particular order:

1. Schroeder Brothers Medal (dark red)
2. Walter Scott Medal (blue)
3. Department Medal of Honor (red/white/blue)
4. William J. Taylor Award (white/green)
5. Mayor's Medal Of Excellence (black/yellow)
6. George Hanna Medal of Honor (red/white/red with H device)
7. George Hanna Medal of Valor (red/white/red with V device)
8. George Hanna Award of Merit (red/white/red with M device)
9. Theodore Roosevelt Award (red/white/blue/white/red)

10. Live Saving Award (white/red/white)
11. Commissioner's Special Citation (green)
12. Commissioner's Commendation (purple)
13. Officer of the Month (light blue)
14. Unit Citation (white/blue/white/blue/white/blue/white/blue/white)
15. Thomas Sullivan Award (white/blue)
16. Years of Service (white/blue/yellow/blue/white with numeric device)
17. Education (green/white/green with A, B or M device)
18. Department Honor Guard (yellow/blue)
19. Certified Instructor (yellow/red)
20. Entry and SWAT Team (black/white)
21. Hostage Negotiator (blue/red)
22. Democratic National Convention (red/white/blue/white/red with DNC device)

Note:

- Amended by Special Order 96-3, issued January 9, 1996, which changed the pocket over which awards should be worn from "left breast pocket" to "right breast pocket".
- Amended by SO 07-016, issued April 2, 2007, update the organization names to reflect the new BPD organizational structures.
- Amended by SO 13-021, issued 5/9/2013. That added the Sec. 3.14 and the last paragraph to Sec. 6.