


<p>RABUN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE</p>  <p>General Order Number: 4.08</p>	<p>Date of Issue</p> <p>2/23/2016</p>	<p>Effective Date</p> <p>2/23/2016</p>	<p>Revision Date</p>
<p>Subject: <b>AWARDS AND RECOGNITION</b></p>	<p>Amends:</p>	<p>Rescinds:</p>	
<p>Index as:</p> <p>Awards and Recognition General Policies and Procedures</p>	<p>State Certification Standards:</p>		
<p>Special Instructions:</p>			

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this General Order is to prescribe the policies and procedures of the Rabun County Sheriff's Office regarding the department's award and recognition program.

**STATEMENT OF POLICY**

It shall be the policy of the Rabun County Sheriff's Office to formally recognize acts of valor, extraordinary achievement, outstanding service, exceptional duty performance and to give other forms of employee recognition when appropriate.

**DISCUSSION**

All employees have the responsibility to report to appropriate departmental officials, any information that may justify the official recognition of an act of valor, extraordinary achievement, outstanding service, or exceptional duty performance, involving another employee, member of the Reserves, volunteer, or other individual not affiliated with the agency. All supervisors and staff personnel who either receive information that may justify the official recognition of another individual, or who identify through personal observation, an individual who may merit official recognition,

have a special obligation to take appropriate and timely follow-up action in accordance with the procedures in this policy.

## **I. DOCUMENTATION**

- A. The Commendation Form in Memo format shall be used to document information to be considered for official departmental recognition of an employee.
- B. Continuation sheets, incident reports, newspaper articles, and other related documents should be attached to the Commendation Form as appropriate to help thoroughly explain the facts and circumstances of the incident in question.
- C. If any information is received from a non-departmental source, commending an employee for actions associated with his/her official duties; it will be referred to a supervisor in the grade of Sergeant or higher for appropriate follow-up action and documentation.
- D. The Commendation Form shall be processed through the employee's Division Commander and Chief Deputy to the Sheriff for further action.
- E. The Sheriff's Commendation and the Police / Sheriff's Services Commendation shall be processed by the Sheriff or Chief Deputy and awarded from that office.

## **II. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- A. Individuals will receive the appropriate recognition based upon an evaluation of available facts and circumstances concerning a particular event, achievement, or period of service in order to determine that establish qualifying criteria are satisfied.
- B. No individual will be excluded from being considered for official departmental recognition because of prior duty performance, conduct, or other factors of a negative nature.
- C. Positive reinforcement is the best method to sustain desired employee performance and conduct. It is also a positive way to recognize members of the general public who help or assist agency employees. It should be given frequently, in public, and whenever an individual merits recognition for his/her efforts. Based upon the circumstances, positive reinforcement may take a variety of forms ranging from a simple "Thank you for a job well done," to a written expression of appreciation/commendation, to the presentation of an award.

## **III. DEPARTMENTAL AWARDS**

The following awards are authorized for presentation to designated individuals who satisfy the required criteria established for each award:

- A. The Medal of Valor;
- B. The Sheriff's Citation for Bravery;
- C. The Sheriff's Life Saving Medal;

- D. The Sheriff's Citation for Meritorious Service;
- E. The Sheriff's Commendation Award

#### **IV. THE MEDAL OF VALOR**

- A. The Medal of Valor is the highest honor that can be bestowed upon an individual affiliated with the department for conspicuous heroism in the line-of-duty under circumstances of extreme personal danger or hazard.
- B. The medal shall be awarded only by order of the Sheriff, subject to the findings that the recommended individual:
  - 1. Acted in the face of a threat from an assailant, posing extreme personal danger, without hesitation or regard for his/her own life and well being;
  - 2. Undertook such action willfully and with full knowledge of the grave risks; and
  - 3. Clearly displayed personal courage and bravery to such an extent that the actions greatly exceeded those normally expected of the public safety profession.
- C. The award shall include the Medal and certificate.

#### **V. THE SHERIFF'S CITATION FOR BRAVERY**

- A. The Sheriff's Citation for Bravery is bestowed upon an individual affiliated with the department who performs extraordinary acts of bravery in the performance of their duties.
- B. The citation shall be awarded only by order of the Sheriff, subject to the findings that the recommended individual:
  - 1. Acted voluntarily, without regard for personal risks or individual safety;
  - 2. Undertook such action under circumstances of clear and obvious peril; and
  - 3. Clearly displayed courage that was distinct from what is normally expected of the public safety profession.
- C. The award shall include the Medal and certificate.

#### **VI. THE SHERIFF'S LIFE SAVING MEDAL**

- A. The Sheriff's Life Saving Medal is the highest award that can be bestowed upon an individual either affiliated or not affiliated with the department, who performs a lifesaving act under extraordinary circumstances.

- B. The medal shall be awarded only by order of the Sheriff, subject to the findings that the recommended individual:
  - 1. Took direct and positive action to preserve the life of another human being who was in real and imminent danger of dying or of suffering extreme personal injury;
  - 2. Undertook such action in a manner that actually prevented the loss of human life or serious bodily injury; and
  - 3. Did not delay his/her rescue attempts by awaiting or obtaining other assistance, which, if not immediately undertaken, would have in all probability resulted in death to the victim.
- C. The award shall include the Medal and certificate. However, this award shall not be duplicated by any other award of higher significance, presented to the same individual for the same incident.

## **VII. THE SHERIFF'S CITATION FOR MERITORIOUS SERVICE**

- A. The Sheriff's Citation for Meritorious Service is the highest award that can be bestowed upon an individual, either affiliated or not affiliated with the department, who demonstrates sustained and exemplary duty performance in support of the department.
- B. The citation shall be awarded only by order of the Sheriff, subject to the findings of the Awards Board that the recommended individual:
  - 1. Performed his/her duties in support of department's stated objectives;
  - 2. Achieved exemplary results that significantly enhanced the department's operational effectiveness and/or efficiency; and
  - 3. Demonstrated such exemplary service over a period of at least 12 continuous months.
- C. The award shall include the lapel/uniform ribbon and certificate.

## **VIII. THE SHERIFF'S COMMENDATION AWARD**

- A. The Sheriff's Commendation Award is the highest award that can be bestowed upon an individual, either affiliated or not affiliated with the department, who demonstrates exemplary duty performance for a single act of service, in support of the department.
- B. The award shall be awarded by order of the Sheriff, when it is determined that the recommended individual:
  - 1. Performed his/her duties in support of department's stated objectives;
  - 2. Achieved exemplary results that significantly enhanced the department's operational effectiveness and/or efficiency; and
  - 3. Demonstrated such exemplary service for the completion of a single noteworthy event or activity in a manner involving unusual creativity, coordination, planning, and execution.

- C. The award shall include the lapel/uniform ribbon and certificate.

#### **IX. SHERIFF'S CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION**

- A. The Sheriff's Certificate of Appreciation can be presented to individuals either affiliated or not affiliated with the department, who make a significant contribution in support of the department.
- B. The Certificate of Appreciation shall be awarded only by order of a major or higher to an individual who merits special recognition and appreciation for a particular event or period of activity.
- C. This form of recognition shall include a certificate signed by the Sheriff.

#### **X. SHERIFF'S AWARD BOARD**

- A. The Awards Board shall be assembled as needed at the direction of the Sheriff or his designee(s). The Sheriff will direct the Chief Deputy to assemble a board consisting of three (3) members representing the Sheriff's Office.
- B. The chairperson shall be appointed by the division Commander assembling the board.
- C. The purpose of the Awards Board is to review and evaluate award recommendations and to:
  - 1. Insure recommendations contain sufficient documented justification for the award for which the individual is being considered;
  - 2. Obtain additional documentation when necessary; and
  - 3. Based upon a thorough evaluation of all available information, determine whether the award:
    - a. Is justified;
    - b. Should be up-graded to a higher award;
    - c. Should be down-graded to a lower award; or
    - d. Should be denied because the justification fails to satisfy the minimum criteria; and
    - e. Make a written recommendation to the Sheriff of the Board's findings concerning each award recommendation.

#### D. Procedures

1. No Board member will evaluate an award recommendation, if the member has personally recommended the individual for the award under consideration.
2. The Board will be conducted at a time and place of the Chairman's choosing and will be held in private. A simple majority vote of those Board members eligible to review an award recommendation is required. The Chairman will vote only if there is a tie vote cast by the Board members.
3. At the discretion of the Chairman, testimonial evidence may be offered in support/against the recommendation should the Board members require additional information upon which to render an informed decision.
4. The written report to the Sheriff will be attached to each award recommendation and will consist of the names of all Board members present and the Board's findings and final recommendation. The report will be signed by the Chairman.

#### XI. PUBLICATION AND RECORDING OF AWARDS

- A. The Sheriff shall make the final decision concerning each award recommendation submitted by the Awards Board.
- B. All decisions made by the Sheriff that authorize the presentation of an award will be made public by Personnel Order from the Office of the Sheriff.
- C. Publication of all awards will be made throughout all official channels to insure the widest possible dissemination.

#### XII. DEPARTMENTAL AWARDS CEREMONIES

- A. The presentation of all awards shall be made during ceremonies as outlined below:
  1. Formal ceremonial presentations shall be required for the:
    - a. Medal of Valor;
    - b. The Sheriff's Citation for Bravery;
    - c. The Sheriff's Life Saving Medal;
    - d. The Sheriff's Citation for Meritorious Service;
  2. Less formal presentation ceremonies may be observed for the remaining awards.
- B. The formal and dignified presentation ceremony shall be performed at a time and location to be determined by the Sheriff, under the direct supervision of the Office of Professional Standards, in accordance with the following guidelines:

1. The ceremony shall take place before an audience including, but not limited to, local dignitaries and other designated guests, fellow employees, friends, and family members of those being recognized, and representatives of the print, radio, and television media;
2. A special guest speaker shall be invited to address the gathering and participate in the presentation of the awards if appropriate; and
3. Individuals selected to receive awards shall be present, in uniform, unless such public exposure might either jeopardize an officer's future effectiveness or safety because of the confidential nature of his/her assigned duties. Under those circumstances, a private presentation will be made in the Sheriff's office before a group of selected individuals.

### **XIII. POSTHUMOUS AWARDS**

Awards made posthumously shall be presented to the next of kin. The manner of that presentation shall be left to the discretion of the Sheriff, subject to the ascertained desires of the recipient's family.

### **XIV. OTHER FORMS OF RECOGNITION**

- A. Qualified employees may be recommended for an award from other professional organizations, subject to the findings of the Awards Board and the approval of the Sheriff. Examples of organizations that from time-to-time present awards to deserving individuals are:
  1. The International Association of Chiefs of Police;
  2. The National Sheriff's Association;
  3. The Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police;
  4. The Georgia Sheriff's Association; and
  5. Local Rabun County civic groups.
- B. The Sheriff may authorize additional forms of recognition as appropriate.



By Order of the Sheriff: **Chad K. Nichols**  
Sheriff, Rabun County