



# POLICY & PROCEDURE

## ELKHART LAKE POLICE DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: **COMMENDATIONS**

SCOPE: All Sworn Personnel  
DISTRIBUTION: Policy & Procedure Manual

REFERENCE: 2021 WI Act 82

NUMBER: 4.01  
ISSUED: 06/01/2015  
EFFECTIVE: 07/15/2015  
 RESCINDS  
 AMENDS  
WILEAG 4<sup>TH</sup> EDITION  
STANDARDS: 4.1.1

---

INDEX AS:	Awards	Commendations
	Merit Review	

**PURPOSE:** This Policy & Procedure establishes a specific procedures and guidelines for awards and commendations issued to members of the Elkhart Lake Police Department and citizens whose meritorious actions meet established standards. These standards provide for uniformity and consistency in the granting of awards and ensure that these awards are properly valued as representing truly significant meritorious behavior.

Awards or commendations are not to be granted without proper cause.

This Policy & Procedure consists of the following numbered sections:

- I. INTRODUCTION
- II. MERIT REVIEW BOARD COMPOSITION AND AUTHORITY
- III. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AWARDS
- IV. MERIT REVIEW BOARD REVIEW
- V. OFFICER COMMENDATIONS
- VI. OFFICER / CIVILIAN AWARDS

- VII. OFFICER SERVICE AWARDS
- VIII. CITIZEN AWARDS
- IX. CIVILIAN STAFF AWARD
- X. UNIFORM AWARD INSIGNIA
- XI. MERIT REVIEW BOARD – QUARTERLY REVIEW
- XII. NON-DEPARTMENTAL RECOGNITION
- XIII. EMPLOYMENT FILE AND COMMENDATIONS

## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The Elkhart Lake Police Department has established high standards of personal performance for its members and expects that their conduct exemplify the highest of professional standards. Those members whose actions, specific achievements, and overall performance exceed Department standards deserve special recognition in the form of a commendation or award.

## II. MERIT REVIEW BOARD COMPOSITION AND AUTHORITY

- A. Merit Review Board Composition and Authority: The Chief of Police shall appoint the Merit Review Board that will consist of: the Chief, Village Administrator, and one Village Board member. The ranking officer shall preside and a quorum shall be three.
- B. The authority of the Merit Review Board and the Chief of Police and/or designee issues all awards and commendations. Commendations are affirmed by the Chief's signature and are issued at the sole discretion of the Chief.
- C. The Department Merit Review Board issues awards only after review and recommendation. The Merit Review Board receives written proposals for the granting of established Department awards and reviews each proposal, conducts an additional investigation if deemed necessary, and makes a specific recommendation to the Chief of Police.

## III. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AWARDS

- A. An individual that has personal knowledge of an act, achievement, or service, and believes that such conduct may qualify for formal recognition can initiate recommendations for awards or commendations. Additional guidelines include:
  - 1. Any Department employee may submit a nomination to the Merit Review Board, including for Employee of the Year.

2. All recommendations for commendation shall be submitted in writing on an inter-office memo to the Chief in a timely manner. The Chief will forward a copy to the Merit Review Board.
3. An individual cannot submit a recommendation or advocate an award through another party if he/she would be the recipient of the award. This includes non-Departmental awards.
4. Awards may also be presented to citizens for their contribution to law enforcement.
5. Recommendations may be accepted at any point during the calendar year.

#### IV. MERIT REVIEW BOARD REVIEW

- A. The information considered by the Merit Review Board includes, but is not limited to:
  1. The significance of the action, achievement, or service that improved the Department's ability to accomplish its mission.
  2. Identify the action that clearly goes beyond the norm, and/or the result of the action that improved morale, discipline, or the effectiveness of the Department.
  3. The Chief will schedule Merit Review Board meetings to discuss the merits of all submissions.
  4. The Chief will prepare the Merit Review Worksheet, prior to the Merit Review Board Meeting.
  5. The committee will discuss the nominations that were submitted and the information to support the awards, and make a recommendation to the Chief.
  6. After approval of the awards by the Chief or designee will make necessary arrangements for ordering the medals, plaques and/or pins for those persons receiving awards for that calendar ceremony.
  7. The Chief or designee will be responsible for presenting awards.
  8. No member of the Merit Review Board may participate in any deliberations of which he or she is the subject or in which there is an apparent conflict of interest.
  9. Merit Review Board discussions leading to the determination of an award are to remain confidential.
  10. Commendations and awards become a permanent part of the employee's personnel record and the issued awards will remain the property of the member to whom they were granted.

## V. OFFICER COMMENDATIONS

- A. These awards will be distributed to officers by the Chief or designee. Additional documentation will be added to the officers shift file or personnel file, dependent on the type of commendation.
1. Supervisory Commendation - May be issued by any Supervisor in recognition of some noteworthy accomplishment by a Department member. The "shift commendation" is documented in the officer's evaluation file and should be reflected in the officer's annual evaluation for that year.
  2. Letter of Commendation - A Letter of Commendation is a higher-level commendation, often issued for either an outstanding single action or outstanding performance over a sustained period of time. "Letter of Commendations" are issued on Department letterhead and addressed to the recipient with a brief description of the action or service for which the commendation is issued.

## VI. OFFICER/CIVILIAN AWARDS

- A. Recipients of these awards will receive their awards at an annual awards recognition ceremony. In addition, a letter on Department letterhead and addressed to the recipient with a brief description of the action or service for which the award is issued will be distributed to the officer and a copy will be placed in his/her permanent personnel file.
1. Employee of the Year - This award is in recognition of sustained delivery of a high level of performance, which supports the Department's mission statement, vision statement and/or values. Some criteria on which to base this award are: job performance, attitude, motivation, dedication to the job, assisting other divisions of the Department, community service and/or job knowledge. All Department personnel are eligible to nominate an "Employee of the Year". Those individuals being nominated, while not being selected, will be issued a Letter of Commendation.
  2. Superior Police Performance - May be initiated by any supervisor to an employee for exceptional performance for specific police duties. This award may be presented to the recipient by that supervisor during roll call, in the presence of his/her fellow officers. This award will be in the form of a printed certificate provided by the Department.
  3. Superior Investigative Performance - May be initiated by any supervisor to an employee for exceptional performance for specific investigative duties. This award may be presented to the recipient by that supervisor during roll call, in the presence of his/her fellow officers. This award will be in the form of a printed certificate provided by the Department.

4. Purple Heart Award - The Purple Heart Award is given to any member of the Department who, while acting on behalf of the Department, engages in conduct directed at the protection of life or bodily security as members of the Department and receives an incapacitating injury.

Incapacitating injury usually means those that require hospitalization, but may include those that prevent the injured member from participating in normal physical functions that were within that member's capacity prior to the injury. The recipient of this award need not have been on duty at the time of the conduct, but needs to be acting within the jurisdictional scope of the Department.

5. Valor Award – The Valor Award is granted to any police officer that, while acting on behalf of the Department, engages in conduct directed at the protection of life or bodily security of another in the face of high risk of bodily harm or death and in a manner that exemplifies courage and the highest level of professionalism. The recipient of this award need not have been on duty at the time of the conduct but needs to be acting within the jurisdictional scope of the Department. In the event the conduct qualifying for this award results in the death of the officer, this award may be given posthumously to an appropriate survivor.
6. Life Saving Award - The Life Saving Award is given to any member of this Department whose actions significantly contribute to the saving or prolonging of the life of another by actions which are beyond the scope of duties normally performed as a member of the Department. The recipient of this award need not have been on duty at the time of the conduct but needs to be acting within the jurisdictional scope of the Department.
7. Distinguished Service Award - The Distinguished Service Award is given to any member of this Department who engages in sustained performance or activities which are clearly beyond the expectations of that member's current assignment and which exemplify the highest level of professional commitment to the mission of the Department.
8. Superior Police Action Award - The Superior Police Action Award is given to any member of this Department who while off duty extends significant assistance to another person in the face of extreme hardship or other risk. Officers excluded from this award are those who may qualify for the Purple Heart, Valor, and Life Saving Award.
9. Firearms Master Award – The Firearms Master Awards are given to members of the Department who have demonstrated outstanding service in proficiency and training in firearms and have shared their mastery with the community.

## VII. OFFICER SERVICE AWARDS

- A. The following awards are granted to members of the Department upon their attainment of the specific measurable standards set for the award and/or upon recommendation of the Merit Review Board.

Recipients will receive a letter on Department letterhead with a brief description of the action or service for which the award is issued and a copy will be placed in his/her permanent personnel file.

1. Safe Driving Awards - Safe Driving Awards are given after five consecutive years without a preventable accident involving a Department vehicle. This award is augmented at five-year intervals (10, 15, 20 etc.) for a continuing consecutive period without a preventable accident. All Department personnel, who in the opinion of the Chief are required to operate Department vehicles on a regular basis, are eligible for this award. This award recognizes the importance of defensive driving to officer safety, public safety, and the orderly and efficient attainment of the Department mission, which relies heavily on motor vehicle travel.
2. Instructor Award - Instructor Awards are given after five consecutive years serving the Department within this capacity. In addition, the recipient must display effort during the tenure of his/her service. This award recognizes the importance of training not only to Department employees but to the community as well. In most cases this award would include field training officers, CPR/First Aid instructors, firearms instructors, Unified Tactical instructors and any other instructor position established by the Department. This award is restricted to sworn personnel who are not assigned to the Training Division.
3. Crime Prevention Awards - Crime Prevention Awards are given after five consecutive years serving the Department within this capacity. In addition, the recipient must display effort during the tenure of his/her service. This award recognizes the importance of community policing and dedication toward these efforts.

## VIII. CITIZEN AWARDS

- A. The following awards are granted to civilians upon their attainment of the specific measurable standards set for the award and/or upon recommendation of the Merit Review Board. Dependent on the type of commendation, recipients may receive a letter on Department letterhead with a brief description of the action or service for which the award is issued and/or an award. Recipients of these awards will receive their awards at an annual awards recognition ceremony.
  1. Letter of Appreciation - Presented to a civilian for assistance in providing prompt action to aid people and/ or in aiding the Department in accomplishment of its mission.
  2. Good Samaritan - Presented to a civilian for assistance in apprehending a criminal, providing prompt action to aid people who are in danger, and/ or in aiding the Department in accomplishment of its mission.

3. Civilian Gallantry Award - Presented to a civilian for assistance in apprehending a criminal, or in extending oneself beyond one's own safety, to provide prompt action to aid people who are in danger, or in aiding the Department in accomplishment of its mission.
4. Civilian Community Service Award - Presented to an individual or an organization for assistance with a singular event or ongoing project that aids the police Department in the accomplishment of its mission.

#### IX. CIVILIAN STAFF AWARD

- A. Exceptional Service Award - May be initiated by any supervisor to an employee for exceptional performance for specific duties related to their current assignment. This award may be presented to the recipient by that supervisor in the presence of his/her peers. This award will be in the form of a printed certificate provided by the Department.

#### X. UNIFORM AWARD INSIGNIA

- A. Whenever a medal, ribbon, medallion or other insignia is presented as part of an award it must be worn in the manner prescribed by Policy & Procedure 2.02: Uniforms. The wearing of any such item, however, is optional and at the discretion of the individual officer.

#### XI. MERIT REVIEW BOARD – QUARTERLY REVIEW

- A. The Merit Review Board will meet on quarterly basis and/or at the discretion of the Chief. When required, meetings will take place in March, June, September and December.

#### XII. NON-DEPARTMENTAL RECOGNITION

- A. Nomination of Department employees for non-Departmental recognition is encouraged, but must be conducted in compliance with this Policy & Procedure. A copy of the award nomination must be submitted to the Chief for historical purposes only. In the event of an award being issued at a specific ceremony, a member from Administration may attend as a Department representative.

#### XIII. EMPLOYMENT FILE AND COMMENDATIONS

- A. Per 2021 WI Act 82, effective November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021, all commendations shall be included in each Department member's employment file. Also refer to Policy & Procedure 2.07: Performance Evaluations

Michael Meeusen  
Chief of Police

This Policy & Procedure cancels and supersedes any and all written directives relative to the subject matter contained herein.

Initial 06/01/2015