
Purpose

It is important to recognize employees and citizens that go above and beyond to further the mission of the Bemidji Police Department and protect the lives of others.

Policy

It is the policy of the Bemidji Police Department to recognize exemplary work by employees and extraordinary acts by citizens.

1. Procedure

Any Bemidji Police Department employee may initiate an award nomination for another Employee of the department or citizen. Any person who wishes to initiate a nomination must compete and submit recognition nomination report form (see attachments). This report will be sent to the sergeant of the unit to which the employee is assigned. The sergeant review the form and then forward the awards committee. The employee who submits a recommendation will be notified by the chair of award committee regarding action taken by the committee.

- A. The issuance of the following awards is not required to be reviewed by the Awards Committee and may be directly awarded by the Chief or designee:
 1. Years of service bar
 2. Senior officer badge
 3. Unit/Section recognition awards
 4. Retirement award
 5. Service appreciation awards

2. Awards Committee

The Bemidji Police Department considers being a member of the awards committee as an honor and privilege. The purpose of the committee shall be to determine if a nominee for an award is being nominated for the appropriate award, and if the member is eligible for the award. The committee may not approve any awards, but simply forward them with a recommendation to the Chief of Police for final approval.

- A. The awards committee shall consist of two officers of patrolman or detective rank, two supervisors, and one non-sworn employee. Membership will be review as needed.
- B. The chief will appoint the chair person. The chair person will select the time and place for meetings, as well as giving meeting notice to members of the board and will be responsible for maintaining the records of all nominations. The chair person will sign recognition nomination reports and forward them accordingly.

- C. Meetings of the board are to be held on a Monday through Friday on an as-needed basis. The meeting should not start before 0800 hours nor end after 2000 hours. Awards committee members who attend meetings while off duty will be paid in accordance with union contract or city policy. When meetings are scheduled during a work shift, supervisors will allow members of the board to attend whenever possible. A majority of the members present will be needed to ratify the award nomination for final consideration by the chief. Any promotion received by a board member while an active member is not just cause for removal from the board.

3. Employee award description and selection criteria

A. MEDAL OF HONOR

1. The Medal of Honor is the highest award given. It may be awarded to an employee for an act of outstanding bravery or heroism. Such an act would be characterized by demonstrated unselfishness, courage, and the immediate high risk of death or serious physical injury. The award may also be posthumously awarded to an employee who has died while involved in an action of heroism to accomplish a meaningful police, civic, or humanitarian goal.
2. The formal medal for this accomplishment would be ribbon bar, plaque, and certificate signed by the Chief and the Mayor of Bemidji.
3. This is the highest ranking award.

B. MEDAL OF VALOR

1. The Medal of Valor may be awarded to an employee who knowingly and purposely exposes him or herself to an extraordinary risk of personal harm or death to accomplish a meaningful police objective.
2. The formal award for this accomplishment would be a ribbon bar and plaque.
3. This is the second highest ranking award.

C. CERTIFICATE OF MERIT

1. Certificate of Merit may be awarded to an employee for performance resulting in improved operations, outstanding community service, or substantial savings in organizational cost. This award may be awarded to an employee for an incident or incidents which clearly show an extraordinary level of expertise, thoroughness, determination, and/or it may be given for achieving a very superior level of performance and maintaining that level for an extended period of time.
2. The formal award for this accomplishment would be a ribbon bar, a customized Bemidji Police Department Challenge Coin, and certificate.
3. This is the third highest ranking award.

D. LIFE SAVING AWARD

1. The Life Saving Award may be awarded to an employee who is directly responsible for saving a human life. The award may also be earned where evidence indicates that actions by the employee prolonged a human life to the extent of the victim being released to the care of medical authorities, even though the victim might expire at a later time. Only one award will be awarded for each incident regardless of the number of victims involved.
2. This award may be awarded in addition to the awarding of a higher medal where the facts show the recipient is entitled to such award.
3. The formal award for this accomplishment would be a ribbon bar and certificate.
4. This is the fourth highest ranking award.

E. LETTER OF COMMENDATION

1. The Letter of Commendation may be awarded to an employee or civilian employee of the department for performing acts including, but not limited to superior handling of a difficult situation, bravery, outstanding performance, or success of difficult police projects, programs, or situations, with such contributions going beyond the normal scope of duty.
2. Letters of Commendation can be directly issued by any supervisor.

F. YEARS OF SERVICE BAR AND SERVICE STRIPES

1. The Years of Service Bar will state the year in which the Officer began service on the Bemidji Police Department. The bar will be attached to and worn under the uniform name tag no higher than 1/4 inch above the right breast uniform pocket.
2. Service Stripes will represent 3 years of service with the Bemidji Police Department.
 - a. Service stripes are optional and may be worn on an officer's winter duty jacket and long sleeve uniform shirt.
 - b. Service stripes will be gold embroidered with a navy blue border.
 - c. Service stripes will be worn on the left sleeve of the officer's duty jacket and long sleeve uniform shirt with the bottom most edge of the bottom stripe sewn on no less than 3.5 inches above the bottom of the sleeve cuff and in line with the shoulder patch.
 - d. Multiple service stripes will be worn as one patch and not sewn on as individual patches.

H. SENIOR OFFICER BADGE

1. In order to distinguish and recognize Bemidji Police Officers who have served the department for 15 years or more, the department will issue one personalized Senior Officer Badge upon the Officer's 15 year anniversary date. The senior

officer badge will consist of a two tone (silver and gold colored) eagle top shield including a state seal, rank or title, department name, Officer's last name, and badge number.

2. Upon the issuance of the senior officer badge, the officer will be required to surrender one previously issued uniform badge.

3. If an officer is promoted, the officer may continue to use the previously issued senior officer badge, or purchase a new badge indicating the new rank at his/her expense.

4. Officers who are issued a senior officer badge by the department may retain that badge upon retirement or separation with the approval of the chief. Employees who are terminated from employment will return the senior officer badge to the department.

I. UNIT/SECTION RECOGNITION AWARDS

1. These awards are authorized for wear by persons who are assigned to, or were previously assigned to participate in a particular Unit or Section, i.e. Bike Patrol, SWAT, K-9 Officer, FTO, etc.

2. The award will include: A ribbon bar.

3. If an officer chooses to wear the ribbon bar, it will be worn above the officer's name tag on the right side of the uniform and below any higher ranking ribbon bar.

J. RETIREMENT AWARD

1. The Retirement Award is to be awarded to employees who have completed the requirements for an official retirement from Minnesota Public Employee Retirement Association.

2. The award will include: A letter acknowledging the retirement signed by the Chief of Police and a gift as authorized by city policy.

K. SERVICE APPRECIATION AWARD

1. The Service Appreciation Award may be awarded to an employee who is leaving the service of the City of Bemidji and has exhibited excellent service to the citizens of the City of Bemidji during their time of employment.

2. The formal award for this accomplishment is a customized Bemidji Police Department Challenge Coin and a letter signed by the Chief.

4. Citizen award description and selection criteria

- A. Medal of Valor
 - 1. The Medal of Valor may be awarded to citizens who render themselves to a risk of personal harm in order to accomplish a meaningful police, civic, or humanitarian goal.
 - 2. The Medal of Valor will consist of a standard pin-on drape or a neck drape attached to a custom medal chosen by the Chief.
- B. Commendation Medal
 - 1. Commendation Medal may be awarded in recognition of a citizen's significant assistance to a level showing extraordinary measures of involvement far beyond that expected of ordinary citizens.
 - 2. The Commendation Medal will consist of a standard pin-on drape or a neck drape attached to a custom medal chosen by the chief.
- C. Citizen Certificate of Recognition
 - 1. This certificate may be given to a citizen for outstanding assistance to the Bemidji Police Department or other efforts on behalf of public safety, usually under difficult circumstances.
 - 2. This award will be a certificate signed by the Chief.
- D. Letters of Appreciation
 - 1. When an officer becomes aware that a citizen has made a special effort to assist the Bemidji Police Department, the officer may request that the chief sign a letter of appreciation drafted by the officer.
 - 2. If an Officer wishes to personally thank the individual, department stationery may be used for this purpose.
 - 3. In cases where juveniles received recognition from the department, permission must first be obtained from the juvenile's parent(s) or guardian(s).

4. Display of Awards.

- 1. Officers are permitted to only wear ribbon bars or pins as designated in this policy, or otherwise approved by the chief of police. In the event more than one ribbon bar is displayed, they will be positioned in order of prominence. The display of ribbon bars on an officer's uniform is optional.
- 2. Ribbon Bars will be displayed as follows:
 - a. Single ribbon bar, 2 bar holder, 3 bar holder, or separate 2 bar holders centered above the name tag, above the right breast pocket.
 - b. The highest-ranking award, as designated in this policy, shall be nearest the right side of the uniform when single bar, 2 bar, or 3 bar holders are worn.
 - c. Separate 2 bar Holders will be double stacked and centered above the name tag, above the right breast pocket. The highest ranking award, as designated in this policy, will be displayed on the top row nearest the right side of the uniform.

Reference or Revision Date(s):

- A. REVISION DATE(S):