

Chapter V Personal Behavior, Appearance and Code of Conduct

Subject 7 Fire Department Awards Program and Meritorious Conduct Policy

507.01 Objective

The purpose of the Cincinnati Fire Department Awards Program is to publicly and officially recognize all members of the Fire Department and other qualified persons who distinguish themselves by performing exceptional acts of heroism, performing commendable acts which are deemed to be above and beyond those normally expected or required of personnel conscientiously discharging their assigned duties, or engaging in other meritorious or exemplary activities.

507.03 Awards Program Guidelines, Explanations and Definitions

A. MEDAL OF VALOR (Highest Award)

Awarded to active uniformed members of the Fire Department who distinguish themselves by performing acts of **gallantry and valor** when saving or attempting to save a life and in the face of **grave** danger of imminent hazard to life, with sure knowledge of the risks involved, and **unquestionably** above and beyond the call of duty.

QUALIFYING CONSIDERATIONS: There must be no margin of error or possibility of doubt in awarding this honor. To justify receipt of this award, individuals nominated must clearly render themselves conspicuous above their comrades by saving or attempting to save a life by an act so outstanding that their gallantry above and beyond the call of duty is easily distinguished from lesser forms of bravery. The deed cited must be one which, had it not been performed, would in no way subject the individual to any justifiable criticism. A Fire Department uniformed member who is killed on duty or who dies as a result of injuries received in the line of duty should be considered for this award.

EXAMPLE: “At a two-story residential structure fire that was heavily involved on the first floor, had fire on the steps to the second floor, and fire in the hallway of the second floor, L17 FAO Corn gained access to the second floor without protection of a hoseline by ascending the steps and hallway through the fire to search for a child reportedly trapped in a bathroom on the second floor. With conditions worsening on the second floor, FAO Corn found the unresponsive child in a bathtub in a bathroom off the hallway. Fire now consumed the second floor stairway, hallway and bedroom, with increasing heat and zero visibility. FAO Corn breeched a wall to gain access to the exterior, guided FF’s below in the placement of a ground ladder to the breeched exterior wall, and carried the child down the ground ladder to safety. After FAO Corn exited the structure and with fire raging out of control, Incident Command ordered all companies out of the structure into defensive fire fighting positions. The structure was a total loss. Paramedics successfully revived the child and transported them to CHMC for treatment of their injuries.”

B. GOLD MALTESE (Second highest award)

Awarded to active uniformed members of the Fire Department who distinguish themselves by performing acts of **gallantry** in the face of **great personal** danger or hazard to life, with knowledge of the risks involved, and above and beyond the call of duty.

QUALIFYING CONSIDERATIONS: To justify receipt of this award, individuals nominated must clearly render themselves conspicuous above their comrades by an outstanding act which is clearly beyond the call of duty. The deed cited must be one which, had it not been performed, would in no way subject the individual to any justifiable criticism. A Fire Department member who is killed while on duty, or who dies as a result of injuries received in the line of duty, should be considered for this award.

EXAMPLE: “At a two-story residential structure fire that was heavily involved on the first floor, L24 Capt. Ugly and FF Krawl gained access to the second floor without protection of a hoseline to search for two children reportedly trapped. With the first floor now fully involved and conditions worsening on the second floor, Capt Ugly and FF Krawl found two unresponsive children beneath a bed in the middle bedroom on the “Delta” side. Fire now impinged upon the second floor stairway, hallway and bedroom, with increasing heat and zero visibility. Capt Ugly and FF Krawl breeched a window to gain access to an exterior fire escape and were able to carry the children to safety. Paramedics successfully revived both children and transported them to CHMC for treatment of their injuries.”

C. **BRONZE MALTESE** (Third highest award)

Awarded to active uniformed members of the Fire Department who bring distinction upon themselves and the Fire Department by exhibiting **extraordinary** bravery or courage in the performance of acts or duties, the level of which exceeds that normally required or expected of such members.

QUALIFYING CONSIDERATIONS: To qualify for this award, individuals nominated must render themselves conspicuous in the performance of acts or duties, under hazardous or potentially hazardous conditions, setting them above and apart from those performing comparable duties. The deed cited must be one which, had it not been performed, would in no way subject the individual to any justifiable criticism. A Fire Department member who is killed while on duty, or who dies as a result of injuries received in the line of duty, should be considered for this award.

EXAMPLE: “At a one-story residential structure fire that was heavy fire from the rear of the first floor, L29 Capt Skirmish and FF Otter gained access to the first floor, assisted with advancement of a hoseline, and began a search for two children reportedly trapped. Under intense heat condition and zero visibility, Capt Skirmish and FF Otter found an unresponsive female victim in a bedroom on the Delta side. With E29 making progress in containing the fire on the first floor, Capt Skirmish and FF Otter dragged the female victim through the first floor and out of the structure. Paramedics successfully revived the female and transported her to UCMC for treatment of her injuries.”

D. BLUE MALTESE (Highest EMS award)

Awarded to active uniformed members of the Fire Department who bring distinction upon themselves and the Fire Department by exhibiting **extraordinary** EMS skills in the performance of acts or duties in treatment of a patient or patients in risk of losing life or sustaining life-threatening injury, the level of which exceeds that normally required or expected of such members.

QUALIFYING CONSIDERATIONS: To qualify for this award, individuals nominated must render themselves conspicuous in the performance of acts or duties during an EMS response, setting them above and apart from those performing comparable duties. The award is given in recognition of the member's critical judgments and actions in performing life-preserving or life-resuscitative efforts for severely injured or ill patients.

EXAMPLE: "Engine 17 and Medic 17 were dispatched to a male unconscious, not breathing. The patient's wife performed CPR with dispatch instructions. Upon arrival, Engine 17 found patient in full cardioresp arrest. Initial rhythm was ventricular fibrillation, and Lifepak 15 monitor shocked one time. However, the patient digressed into an Idioventricular PEA. Full ACLS care began, including CPR, BVM, IV, Medications, and ET Intubation. Engine 17 and Medic 17 were able to achieve Return Of Spontaneous Circulation on scene, and the patient actually took several breaths on scene. Immense difficulty getting patient from third floor to M17 due to wet, dark, narrow wooden steps. Maintained ROSC en route, and Medic 17 actually had to extubate the patient because he was breathing so well and fighting the ET tube. Per UCMC, massive MI; acute clot in circumflex artery, full recovery to discharge."

E. DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

Awarded to active members of the Fire Department for the commendable performance of operational duties or non-operational efforts contributing to the success of fire safety, fire prevention, or community relations programs.

QUALIFYING CONSIDERATIONS: To qualify for this award the individuals nominated must have performed distinguishing acts or duties in a manner deemed to be above that normally required or expected, and sufficient to set them apart from those performing comparable duties.

E. FIRE CHIEF'S AWARD

This award may be presented to fire service individuals, groups, or companies, who, in the opinion of the Fire Chief, have performed in a manner which the Fire Chief feels is beyond that which is normally expected of them.

This award may be presented in conjunction with, or in the absence of, a nomination for another award. Individuals, groups, or companies failing to garner the majority approval of the Awards Screening Committee as a result of being nominated for any of the previously

listed awards would remain eligible for the presentation of this award as recommended by the Fire Chief.

F. FIRE SERVICE AWARD OF MERIT

This award may be presented to active members of the Fire Department or Fire Department Companies who have performed in a manner beyond what is normally expected of them at a fire-based operational incident or non-operational activity. Additionally, this award may be presented in conjunction with, or in the absence of, a nomination for another award at the discretion of an Assistant Chief or District Chief. Fire Department Companies, groups, or individuals failing to garner the majority approval of the Awards Screening Committee as a result of being nominated for any of the previously listed awards would remain eligible for the presentation of this award as recommended by the involved nominating Chief Officer.

G. EMS SERVICE AWARD OF MERIT

This award may be presented to active members of the Fire Department or Fire Department Companies who have performed in a manner beyond what is normally expected of them at an EMS-based operational incident or non-operational activity. Additionally, this award may be presented in conjunction with, or in the absence of, a nomination for another award at the discretion of an Assistant Chief or District Chief. Fire Department Companies, groups, or individuals failing to garner the majority approval of the Awards Screening Committee as a result of being nominated for any of the previously listed awards would remain eligible for the presentation of this award as recommended by the involved nominating Chief Officer.

H. COMPANY/UNIT AWARD

This award may be presented to a Fire Department Company/Unit that brings distinction upon themselves and the Fire Department by exhibiting bravery or courage in the performance of acts or duties, for the commendable performance of operational acts or duties, or exhibiting EMS skills in treatment of a patient or patients in risk of losing life or sustaining life-threatening injury, the level of which exceeds that normally required or expected of such members.

The respective members of the Fire Department Company on that Unit who responded to the incident shall also receive the appropriate individual award in addition to the Company/Unit Award. For example, a Company/Unit Award may be presented to Engine 17/Unit 3 and Medic 17/Unit 3 for the successful return of spontaneous circulation of a 40 year old victim of cardiac arrest, and, in addition, a Blue Maltese may be presented to the members who responded to the incident,.

I. FIRE FIGHTER'S CROSS

Awarded posthumously to members of the Fire Department who are killed while on duty, or who die as a result of injuries received in the line of duty.

J. CITIZEN'S AWARD FOR BRAVERY

Awarded to citizens, other than members of the fire service, who distinguish themselves by performing heroic acts involving hazard to life or great personal danger, while saving or attempting to save a life.

K. CITIZEN'S AWARD FOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

Awarded to citizens, other than members of the fire service, who have distinguished themselves by performing acts or duties in a manner deemed to be above that normally required or expected, and sufficient to set them apart from their peers.

L. FIREHOUSE AWARD

This award may be presented to a Cincinnati Fire Department Firehouse (Fire Station) that brings distinction upon themselves and the Fire Department.

QUALIFYING CONSIDERATIONS: To qualify for this award, the Firehouse should exhibit criteria that include, but not be limited to, significant contributions to the Fire Department or the community, customer service, Fire Department level awards, innovativeness, implementation of quality management principles or initiatives, quality of life initiatives (inside or outside of the Firehouse or Fire Department), or other significant achievements.

NOMINATION PROCEDURE: The District Chiefs in each Fire District, upon reaching a consensus based upon qualifying criteria, may nominate a Firehouse from their respective District. The nomination shall be submitted to the Awards Screening Committee by no later than December 1 of each calendar year. The Awards Screening Committee may select up to one (1) Firehouse to receive the Firehouse Award each year from the nominations submitted. It is not required for each Fire District to submit a nomination or for the Awards Screening Committee to select a Firehouse. Qualifying criteria should be the primary consideration.

507.05 Nomination Procedures

- A. Any member of the Fire Department may nominate an individual or individuals for an award. Normally, this nomination will be initiated by, or through, the Immediate Supervisor of the member being nominated. Nominations may also be received by persons other than members of the Fire Department.
- B. Nominations shall be forwarded through normal channels to the Operations Bureau Assistant Chief using a **Form 22 Recommendation for Commendation**. The narrative should include a detailed account of the incident and all other pertinent information. Include the names of any witness or other person involved and the extent of any injuries.
- C. In general, an awards nomination should be initiated and channeled through the chain of command to the Operations Bureau Assistant Chief as soon after the occurrence as possible, preferably no later than the duty day immediately following that on which the incident occurred.

507.07 Nomination Timeline

- A. It is paramount to the accuracy of the Awards Screening Committee investigation that the incident is fresh in the minds of those fire fighters who responded. Accordingly, a Nomination Timeline has been developed as a guideline.
1. Members of the Fire Department should submit a Form 22 Recommendation for Commendation within 30 days of the incident.
 2. With 10 days of receiving a completed Form 22 Recommendation for Commendation, the Chairman of the Awards Screening Committee should assign a member(s) of the committee to investigate the incident and the actions taken by the responding members.
 3. With 10 days of being assigned an incident to investigate, the member(s) of the Awards Screening Committee should complete a written report with a detailed description of the incident, actions taken by members, a summary of the investigation, and a recommendation for appropriate award. Completed Award Investigations should be sent to the Chairman of the Awards Screening Committee via electronic mail.
- B. The Awards Screening Committee should compile all Form 22 Recommendation for Commendation on a calendar year basis, from January to December, to be considered for the Awards Banquet. A Form 22 Recommendation for Commendation received for incidents occurring after December 31 should be considered for the following year's Awards Banquet. A final award recipient list should be completed by no later than February 1 for the Award Banquet.

507.09 Award Ribbons

- A. Along with each award, members of the Fire Department shall be presented a Fire Department Award Ribbon, a narrow, color-coded metallic plate to be worn on the Class A Jacket above the Name Tag. Ribbons are placed on the Class A Jacket in decreasing order, with the highest award placed on top.
- B. The Gold Maltese (Yellow colored ribbon) is the highest award ribbon issued, followed by the Bronze Maltese (Orange ribbon), Blue Maltese (Blue ribbon), Distinguished Service Award (Green ribbon), Fire Service Award of Merit (Red ribbon), and EMS Award of Merit (White ribbon).
- C. Members shall place same colored ribbons together. Members who receive the Medal of Valor or Ohio Fire Service Valor Award shall place these medals above all ribbons.

507.11 Award Plaques

- A. Along with each award, members of the Fire Department shall be presented a Fire Department Award Plaque, containing the member's name, Award given, and a brief description of qualifying considerations.
- B. Along with each Company/Unit Award, Fire Companies shall be presented a Fire Department Award Plaque, containing the names of the members were responded with the Fire Company at the time of the incident and a brief description of the qualifying considerations.
- C. Company Commanders shall designate an area in each Fire Station for the appropriate display of a Fire Department Award Plaque awarded to a Fire Company.

507.13 Awards Screening Committee

- A. The Fire Department Awards Screening Committee shall be composed of at least nine (9) members of the uniformed Fire Department who represent a cross section of the various bureaus and ranks within the Fire Department. Committee members shall be chosen according to the following guidelines.
 - 1. The chairman shall be appointed by the Fire Chief.
 - 2. The Assistant Chief of Administration, Fire Prevention, Human Resources and Operations Bureaus shall appoint one (1) member each from their respective bureaus
 - 3. ALS 1 shall appoint one (1) member
 - 4. The President of IAFF Local 48 may appoint one member
 - 5. At least two additional committee members shall be appointed at large by the Fire Chief
- B. No individual may serve in more than one of the above stated committee positions (1 through 5) at one time.
- C. Each appointment to the Awards Screening Committee shall ordinarily be for a term of three (3) years, and, at the end of such period, members may be considered for re-appointment. Committee members who are unable to complete their appointed terms will be replaced by Fire Department members belonging to the same organizational category and appointed by the same process utilized in making the original appointments.
- D. The Awards Screening Committee Chairperson shall appoint a Banquet Sub-Committee, comprised of the CFD Studio Staff, the CFD Community Affairs PIO, a member of the Cincinnati Fire Foundation and other members deemed necessary by the Fire Chief or the Award Screening Committee Chairman. This sub-committee shall be responsible for all arrangements concerning the presentations of awards, subject to the approval of the Fire

Chief. They shall keep the Public Information Office and Cincinnati Fire Foundation informed of all details pertaining to the banquet and the presentation of the awards.

- E. The Awards Screening Committee shall hold quarterly meetings and may also be convened by the Committee Chairman for special meetings when necessary.
- F. Whenever committee meetings are held, it shall require the presence of five (5) voting members to constitute a quorum.
- G. The Operations Bureau Assistant Chief shall forward all submitted Form 22 Recommendation for Commendations to the Awards Screening Committee Chairperson. At the next Awards Screening Committee meeting, the Awards Screening Committee Chairperson may assign a committee member or members to thoroughly investigate the incident or activity, carefully review the specific criteria, and make a recommendation for approval or rejection to the Awards Screening Committee.
- H. Each member of the Awards Screening Committee shall have an equal vote, with the exception of the Chairman, who shall not vote.
- I. No official recognition shall be accorded Fire Department members, nor shall any awards be conferred upon them for services rendered in the discharge of their duties, until such time as the Awards Screening Committee has officially authorized such recognition or award.
- J. The Fire Chief shall make the actual award presentations.

507.15 Award Screening Committee Guidelines, Explanations and Definitions

A. MEDAL OF VALOR

The Medal of Valor is the highest award that can be bestowed upon a uniformed member of the Fire Department. The Awards Screening Committee must thoroughly investigate and carefully review the particular qualifying criteria of uniformed members nominated for this prestigious award. In addition, this award should nearly always be reserved for presentation to an individual Fire Department uniformed member for an act performed in the presence of others, where verification of the circumstances surrounding the event can be readily obtained and the potential for error is minimized.

A good deal of judgment will have to be exercised when deciding whether or not a nominee is qualified for this award. In general terms, if there is any question in the mind of those Fire Department members acting as the screening committee with respect to any of the particulars listed in the *Qualifying Considerations*, they may want to consider presenting a lesser award.

EXPLANATION AND DEFINITIONS:

1. “*Must clearly render themselves conspicuous above their comrades*” – that the act performed be one which was either observed or leaves little room for speculations to the

probable actions taken; it should also have been an act that others in the same position as the nominee had an opportunity to perform, but justifiably declined to undertake, or failed in the attempt to perform.

2. *“By an act so outstanding that it clearly distinguishes his gallantry”* – that the act performed must be one which could not be considered as being routine or ordinary in any way and taken with dashing courage or heroic bravery.
3. *“Beyond the call of duty”* – that the act performed was more than expected or required to do by moral or legal obligation; in excess of an action or task required by one’s position or occupation
4. *“Bravery”* – refers to confident bearing in the face of difficulties or dangers
5. *“In the face of grave danger”* – threatening a seriously bad outcome or involving serious issues with liability or exposure to harm, injury, risk or peril
6. *“Imminent hazard to life”* – likely to occur at any moment; impending danger or peril; expose to risk
7. *“Knowledge of the risks involved”* – clear and certain mental apprehension to the exposure of the chance of injury or loss

The nominee must have been aware of the risks involved in the situation in order to qualify for this award. This award should usually be reserved for those situations where there actually was grave danger or imminent hazard to life, not for situations where the nominee thought, or even had good reason to believe, that actual danger existed, or where the risks involved were thought to be greater than they actually turned out to be.

B. GOLD MALTESE

This is the second highest award that can be bestowed upon a uniformed member of the Fire Department. In most cases, an individual awarded this honor will at least have received some consideration as a possible recipient of the Medal of Valor. The difference in the Qualifying Considerations between the Gold Maltese and the Medal of Valor award are, for the most part, differences in degree rather than type.

This award should usually be reserved for presentation to an individual Fire Department uniformed member for an obviously courageous act, decidedly beyond that normally required, and about which the potential for error concerning verification of relevant circumstances is minimized. Explanations of the requirements listed in the Qualifying Considerations for receipt of this award are much the same as those listed for the Medal of Valor. While careful investigative procedures are highly encouraged, the intense level of scrutiny demanded of the Medal of Valor nominations is not mandatory for this award.

EXPLANATION AND DEFINITIONS:

1. “*Must clearly render themselves conspicuous above their comrades*” – that the act performed be one which was either observed or leaves little room for speculations to the probable actions taken; it should also have been an act that others in the same position as the nominee had an opportunity to perform, but justifiably declined to undertake, or failed in the attempt to perform.
2. “Gallantry” – spirited and conspicuous bravery in the face of difficulties or danger
3. “Great personal danger” – threatening a bad outcome or involving issues with liability or exposure to harm, injury, risk or peril

Some descriptive words have been removed to allow for flexibility of choice between these two highly prestigious awards in situations where individual committee members have difficulties in determining which qualifying considerations apply.

C. BRONZE MALTESE

This is the third highest award that can be bestowed upon a uniformed member of the Fire Department. In most cases, an individual awarded this honor will have received at least some consideration as a possible recipient of the Gold Maltese. Once again, the basic difference in Qualifying Considerations between the Bronze Maltese and the Gold Maltese award are, for the most part, differences in degree rather than type.

This award should be presented to a Fire Department uniformed member or members performing courageous and selfless acts beyond what are normally required and the circumstances of which can be reliably determined.

EXPLANATION AND DEFINITIONS:

1. “*Distinction*” – distinguishing or treating with special honor, attention or favor
2. “*Conspicuous in the performance of acts or duties, under hazardous or potentially hazardous conditions*” – an extraordinary courageous act, yet not performed “*under imminent hazard to life*” as is outlined for the Medal of Valor, nor “*in the face of great danger*”, as outlined for the Gold Maltese.

Other fairly obvious omissions and revisions serve to make these qualifying considerations sufficiently diminished from those of the higher awards. Still, it should be remembered that none of these awards should be presented to members who do not at least meet the minimum stated requirements for each listed category.

D. BLUE MALTESE

This is the highest EMS award that can be bestowed upon a uniformed member of the Fire Department. This award should be given in recognition of the member’s critical judgments and actions in performing life-preserving or life-resuscitative efforts for severely injured or ill

patients during EMS incidents. The Committee should use caution to not exclusively use the outcome of the patient to determine the Qualifying Considerations. However, a broader scope of the performance should be used. A Return of Spontaneous Circulation is one definitive consideration, but other factors should be considered as well.

E. DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

This award was meant to be broader in scope than the first four. It may be presented for operational incidents or non-operational activities. The committee should exercise its good judgment in applying the admittedly broad criteria of this award, so as not to diminish its importance in the eyes of the various recipients who are presented the award for the many divergent deeds or activities which qualify.

F. FIRE CHIEF'S AWARD

The basic criteria for this award are fairly broad. The main idea is to allow formal recognition of deserving fire service individuals, groups or companies from the Fire Chief's level.

G. FIRE SERVICE AWARD OF MERIT

The basic criteria for this award are fairly broad. It may be presented for fire-based operational incidents or non-operational activities. The main idea is to allow formal recognition of deserving Fire Department members or companies from the Assistant Chief and District Chief's level.

H. EMS SERVICE AWARD OF MERIT

The basic criteria for this award are fairly broad. It may be presented for EMS-based operational incidents or non-operational activities. The main idea is to allow formal recognition of deserving Fire Department members or companies from the Assistant Chief and District Chief's level.

I. CITIZEN'S AWARD FOR BRAVERY

The criteria for this award are that a hazardous or potentially hazardous condition did occur that required extraordinary courage to perform the act or deed. While the criteria for this award is fairly broad, it is intended to recognize citizens who perform courageous acts or deeds that set them apart from other citizens and would not have brought criticism upon them had they not performed the act or deed.

J. CITIZEN'S AWARD FOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

This award is meant to be broader in scope than the Citizen's Award for Bravery. Service rather than bravery is emphasized for this award.

507.17 Personnel Service Jacket

- A. As with all awards, a copy of the certificate or accompanying letter will become a permanent part of each recipient's personnel file.