### GENERAL

The VCU Police Department will recognize outstanding performance of employees, other public safety employees, citizens and organizations making substantial personal contributions to the department and the community. The department will identify and recognize specific acts of heroism, bravery or notable accomplishments and establish guidelines to identify those who have distinguished themselves through performance of those acts or accomplishments.

The department bestows awards and commendations in the form of medals and accompanying commendation bars, plaques, certificates and letters of achievement. All communications relating to the awards and commendations process shall be routed through the chain-of-command. In order to maintain the credibility of the awards program, thorough documentation supporting the nomination is mandatory and shall be attached to the nominating correspondence. The purpose of this directive is to explain the various types of awards and citations available to members of the department.

### ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

All employees are expected to fully comply with the guidelines and timelines set forth in this written directive. Failure to comply will result in appropriate corrective action. Responsibility rests with the division commander to ensure that any violations of policy are investigated and appropriate training, counseling and/or disciplinary action is initiated.

### POLICE MEDALS AND BARS

A. **Medal of Valor** - This medal and bar is awarded for an act of outstanding bravery, intelligently performed in the line of duty at imminent personal hazard of life under circumstances evincing a disregard of personal consequences

B. **Life Saving Bar** - This bar is awarded for an act involving the rescue that sustains the life of another

C. **Meritorious Police Conduct Bar** - This bar is awarded for the following:
   1. An intelligent and valuable police service demonstrating special faithfulness, attention to duty and perseverance over an extended period of time
2. Completion of 20 years of honorable service as determined by the Chief of Police

3. Removal of at least 20 illegal firearms from public circulation

D. Excellent Police Conduct Bar - This bar is awarded for the following:

1. An intelligent act contributing to a valuable police accomplishment or for submission of a device, process or method adopted by the Department to increase efficiency in administrative or tactical procedure.

2. Removal of at least 10 illegal firearms from public circulation

E. Rookie of the Year - This bar is awarded to the most outstanding rookie for academic achievements, esprit de corps, personal appearance, professional manner, and performance of duties during the probationary year. The candidate may not have prior law enforcement experience.

POLICE AWARDS

A. Good Conduct Bar - An employee is eligible if they have completed 1 year of service beyond their probationary period, and maintains a record of no serious disciplinary action, and has been recommended by their immediate supervisor and endorsed by their division commander. It shall be the immediate supervisor's responsibility to collect the medal of any employee who goes on an active disciplinary status. That employee shall not be eligible to re-attain the medal until their status is cleared.

B. Physical Fitness Bar - The physical fitness medal will be issued to employees who can obtain an 85% score or better on the mandatory physical fitness assessment. The employee will have to demonstrate on a yearly basis, their ability to meet the qualifying requirements to continue to wear the medal. Once achieved, members who fail to maintain this score will no longer be eligible to wear this bar.

C. Safe Driving Bar - A safe driving medal will be given to those officers who have not been involved in a preventable accident. Supervisors shall collect the medal of an employee who is found at fault in an accident until a 36-month period from the date taken has gone by, and the officer has had no accidents where they were at fault.

D. Police Instructor Bar – This bar is awarded to those who have been certified as a Police Instructor by the Department of Criminal Justice Services and have maintained this status for five consecutive years of active service as determined by the Training Division.

E. Police Firearms Bar – This bar is awarded to those department members who receive a qualifying score of 93 or better on the state-mandated firearm course may receive this breast bar. Once achieved, members who fail to maintain this score will no longer be eligible to wear this medal.

WEARING OF POLICE AWARDS
A. Breast bar awards shall be worn with the Class A long sleeve uniform and with the formal dress uniform.

B. Breast bar awards shall not be worn with the Class A short sleeve uniform, Class B uniform or department sweater.

C. The department breast bars shall be worn horizontally above the right breast pocket, centered along the top pocket seam.

D. When wearing more than one bar, each bar shall be worn horizontally, centered as a group above the pocket, with the highest award worn on the left, closest to the center of the uniform. There shall be no more than three bars in each row.

E. The awards are to be worn top to bottom in the order of their ranking with the lowest medal in the cluster above the nameplate.

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CITIZEN APPRECIATION PROCEDURE

A. Any member of the VCU community shall be eligible to receive the VCUPD Certificate of Appreciation upon being nominated. The community includes any staff, student, alumni, or person significantly associated with the University.

B. Any officer of the VCUPD may nominate, in writing, any eligible person whose contributions serve to assist an officer in carrying out the department's mission.

C. Such nominations must be submitted to a supervisor, who reviews the request and make a recommendation to the appropriate division commander.

D. The division commander will then prepare a report for the Chief of Police containing his recommendation for approval/disapproval.
E. The primary circumstances for which a citizen may be nominated by officers will include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Witnesses to criminal acts who provide crucial testimony, in and out of court.
2. Persons who assist in the apprehension of perpetrators of criminal acts.
3. Persons who render any needed professional service to a member of the VCUPD.
4. Any person who provides a substantial contribution, which meets the stated purpose of this policy.
5. Any person who provides service contributions, which aids the VCUPD in attaining its goals toward enhancing police/community mutuality.

F. If the Chief of Police approves such a nomination, he shall then certify the same by placing his signature on the appropriate form provided.

G. The department may report the granting of the award to the PIO for inclusion in social media and University publications.

CHIEF’S VISIONARY AWARD

The Chief’s Visionary Award is a special award which may be presented at any time by the Chief of Police to VCUPD members who have demonstrated exceptional performance, innovative solutions, or unique programs in an effort to advance superior police services and departmental goals. Members receiving this award display the highest spirit of community and public service.

LETTERS OF COMMENDATION

A. A letter of commendation, so titled, can be placed in any department member’s file if that employee is involved in an arrest of a suspect wanted for a violent felony, or if they risk life or serious injury in the fulfillment of their duties. These letters are also highly encouraged as a means for superiors to identify exemplary performance by civilians under their immediate command, in lieu of or in addition to a particular medal.

B. The procedure for receiving a letter of commendation will be as follows: if an employee of the VCUPD feels that they or another employee deserves a commendation letter, they should request that a division supervisor, commander, or head review the situation. After such a review, a letter will be forwarded to the appropriate division chief with recommendations. The division chief will determine if the employee's action(s) warrants a letter of commendation and take appropriate steps to order one, if warranted.

GOLD STAR AWARD

A. Any member of the VCUPD shall be eligible to receive the Gold Star Award upon being nominated. An officer or civilian employee may nominate any employee whose contributions serve to assist the agency in carrying out its stated mission.
B. This nomination must be forwarded, in writing, to the employee’s supervisor who shall review the nomination and make a decision as to whether the Gold Star is awarded.

C. Should the Gold Star Award be presented to the employee, the supervisor shall complete the document and provide a copy to the employee, a copy to the employee’s file and a copy to the executive assistant to the Administrative Coordinator for the Office of the Chief of Police.

D. On a quarterly basis, all employees who received a Gold Star Award during the most recent period will have their names placed in a random drawing conducted by the Office of the Chief of Police.

NOMINATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURE

A. Nomination Procedure:

1. Any member of the department may nominate an individual for an award, citation or certificate. In order to ensure that the qualifications as described in this policy are present, the person nominating someone should have knowledge of the event/action by personal observation or as a result of investigation of the event/action.

2. Letters of Nominations shall include, but are not limited to, the following information:
   a. A statement from at least one eyewitness, if possible,
   b. Precise time and location of the event/action, if applicable,
   c. Names of all persons involved and any eyewitnesses,
   d. Description of any injuries received by the nominee,
   e. A detailed narrative of the event/action and other pertinent information, and
   f. An Award Letter Form (VCUPD-76) will be attached by the submitting member to the Letter of Nomination. In case of multiple nominations being submitted in one packet, a VCUPD-76 shall be completed for each nominated individual.
   g. Nominees shall not be notified of the submission of an award nomination by the individual who nominated them.

B. Selection Procedure:

1. The Assistant Chief of Police will appoint the members of the Honors Board.

2. The Board will consist of the following members:
   a. One Captain who will serve as the Board Chairperson and serve a two year term,
b. *One Lieutenant who will serve a one-year term,*
c. *One Sergeant who will serve a one-year term,*
d. *One Police Officer who will serve a one-year term,* and
e. *One Civilian employee who will serve a one-year term.*

C. **Honors Board:**

1. *The Honors Board shall meet at the call of the chairperson to review nominations and make recommendations to the Chief of Police.*

2. *If a member of the Board becomes eligible for any award, he/she shall excuse himself/herself from voting. The PIO will serve as an ex-officio member and vote only in the case of a tie.*

3. *A department member who believes he/she is entitled to an award may request the Board to act on the request by writing a letter through his/her commander or civilian manager.*

4. *If a member of the department is recommended for an award but rejected by the Board, the member may be given either a Letter of Appreciation or a Citation Certificate.*

5. *The Board will review and vote on each nomination.*
   a. *A majority vote determines if a recommendation will be forwarded, as submitted by the nominee to the Chief of Police.*
   b. *The Board, at its discretion, may recommend the presentation of a different award, if more appropriate.*
   c. *The Board will forward their recommendations to the Chief of Police for final review and approval.*
   d. *The final decision to grant the award rests with the Chief of Police.*

**UNIVERSITY AWARDS**

*VCU offers a variety of reward and recognition programs for employees. More information can be found on the Human Resources website at: [http://www.hr.vcu.edu/compensation-and-rewards/rewards-and-recognition/](http://www.hr.vcu.edu/compensation-and-rewards/rewards-and-recognition/)*

**UNIVERSITY SERVICE AWARDS**

The university awards employees, starting with the completion of five years of service, and then continues on after each five-year period. (5-10-15 etc.) To acknowledge those members of the Virginia Commonwealth University community who contribute personal efforts to assist the VCU Police Department in the furtherance of its University mission.