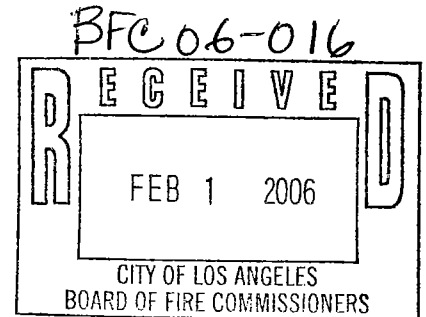


LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT



WILLIAM R. BAMATTRE
FIRE CHIEF

January 24, 2006



TO: The Honorable Board of Fire Commissioners
City of Los Angeles

FROM: William R. Bamattre
Fire Chief

SUBJECT: HONORARY AWARDS

SUMMARY

Beginning in July 2004, the Department's Labor-Management Executive Committee created an Honorary Awards Sub-Committee to review and revise the honorary awards process. Their report and recommendations were reviewed and approved by the Labor-Management Executive Committee on January 17, 2006. Significant changes to the honorary awards process were made in updating the investigation and approval process, defining the thresholds for recognizing acts of bravery, and creating two new awards.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the enclosed revisions to Section 16 of Department Rules and Regulations defining Honorary Awards be approved (see attachment).
2. That the addition of a Phoenix Award, an honorary award presented posthumously to the surviving family of a uniformed Department member that perished as a result of a duty related death be approved.
3. That the addition of a Medal of Merit, an honorary award presented to a uniformed member for performing an act of conspicuous bravery not meeting the threshold for a Medal of Valor be approved.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Prior to August 2001, investigations of meritorious conduct were coordinated through the Operations office, and assigned to each Bureau Commander on a rotating basis.

On August 21, 2001, the Fire Chief established a Revision Committee charged with streamlining and improving the honorary awards investigation process. The Revision Committee was comprised of eight Department members from various assignments and ranks. In December 2003, the Revision Committee forwarded their completed study to the Fire Chief, with seven specific recommendations.

One of the recommendations was the creation of a twelve-member Board of Honorary Awards. Building upon this recommendation, and through the efforts of the Labor-Management Executive Committee, a new Honorary Awards Sub-Committee was formed.

In May 2004, twelve Department members were assigned to participate as part of this new Honorary Awards Sub-Committee. In June 2004, four members representing United Firefighters of Los Angeles City, four members representing the Chief Officers Association, and four members representing Management convened their first meeting. Over the next six months, the Honorary Awards Sub-Committee built upon recommendations from the Revision Committee and agreed to:

- Determine an investigation and recommendation process by which meritorious conduct could be consistently substantiated and recognized.
- Review and revise Section 16 of the Rules and Regulations.
- Create a new Phoenix Award for members who died in the line of duty performing an act of conspicuous bravery.
- Create a new Medal of Merit Award for those members who perform an act of bravery not meeting the threshold of a Medal of Valor.
- Revise the tracking worksheet for timely and organized investigations.
- Prepare a Departmental Bulletin that explains the process to all Department members.

On January 17, 2006, the Labor-Management Executive Committee approved all of the recommendations of the Honorary Awards Sub-Committee, including the addition of two new awards.

DEFINITION OF HONORARY AWARDS

Medal of Valor Award

To qualify for the prestigious Medal of Valor Award, the recipient must be a sworn member of the LAFD and perform an act based on the following criteria:

The Medal of Valor Award shall be awarded to sworn personnel who have demonstrated bravery at great personal risk to his or her own life, beyond a doubt and clearly above the call of duty, whether on or off duty.



Comment

The Honorary Awards Sub-Committee made minor modifications to the current language defining this Award. Of note is the inclusion of an act of bravery performed off duty.

Medal of Merit

To qualify for the prestigious Medal of Merit Award, the recipient must be a sworn member of the LAFD and perform an act based on the following criteria:

The Medal of Merit Award shall be awarded to sworn personnel who distinguish themselves by performing an act where the member's actions, if not taken, would have resulted in serious injury or present imminent danger to life. The member must have demonstrated a conspicuous act of bravery with calculated personal risk to his or her own life.



Comment

This new award will include a medal as illustrated, worn on the dress uniform. This replaces the former Award of Merit and Certificate of Merit. Past Award of Merit recipients will be retroactively issued the Medal of Merit.

The Phoenix Award

To qualify for the prestigious Phoenix Award, the recipient must have been a sworn member of the LAFD and perished as a result of a duty related death. The Phoenix Award shall be presented posthumously to the member's surviving family designee.



Comment

The Honorary Awards Sub-Committee considered all duty-connected deaths in their discussions regarding the newly designed Phoenix Award. This award recognizes those who made the ultimate sacrifice in their service to others.

Letter of Special Commendation

To qualify for the Letter of Special Commendation, any Department member must perform an act during emergency or non-emergency conditions requiring initiative and/or ability worthy of recognition. Qualifying members shall receive a Letter of Special Commendation by recommendation of the Fire Chief, which may or may not be based on findings by the Board of Honorary Awards Sub-Committee.

HONORARY AWARDS INVESTIGATION PROCESS

Any Department member may initiate a recommendation to have the facts surrounding an act of initiative and bravery to be reviewed. The member's recommendation will be forwarded THROUGH CHANNELS to the Fire Chief. The report will be forwarded to: the Planning Section, then to the Labor-Management Executive Committee, and then to the Honorary Awards Sub-Committee.

The establishment of the new Board of Honorary Awards Sub-Committee was to streamline, expedite, and improve both honorary awards investigations and the selection process. The following defines the investigation process and how recipients are selected for honorary awards:

1. The Chairman shall select three Honorary Awards Sub-Committee members to investigate each claim, and appoint one person as team leader. The team leader shall be responsible for sending an F-225 letter of acknowledgement through channels to the initiator. In addition, a phone call shall be made to the initiator advising him/her of the investigation.
2. Upon receipt of notification from the Chairman, the investigating team will make every effort to provide a completed report to the Honorary Awards Sub-Committee within 30 to 60 days. Steps in the investigation should include:
 - A review of reports.
 - Interviews with all involved parties. With the approval of the interviewee, interviews will be tape-recorded. Recordings will be created for the sole purpose of allowing interviewers to ask questions and record answers in a conversational manner. Recordings shall be returned to the interviewee following completion of the investigation.
 - Interviews will be conducted by at least two team members when possible.
 - Interviews with Department members will be accomplished utilizing V-funds when necessary. Detail letters can be facilitated through the Operations office.
 - Phone interviews may be appropriate for those persons who are providing minimal or incidental information.
 - When appropriate, interviews with subject matter experts should be conducted to assist in properly weighing the significance of the act.
 - A review of past Honorary Awards Sub-Committee reports for similar instances of bravery and initiative.

3. The format of the report prepared by the investigating team to the Honorary Awards Sub-Committee will include:
 - Summary – a brief description of the event and which actions were substantiated by the investigation.
 - Findings – a paraphrasing of all interviews, relevant records, and timelines. Attachments will be made a part of the report.
 - Discussion – To establish consistency, prior like occurrences that resulted in an honorary award will be cited.
4. Upon receiving a report from the investigating team, the Honorary Awards Sub-Committee shall review the report and convene to make a determination as to the appropriate award, if any. A quorum will be constituted by at least nine Honorary Awards Sub-Committee members. Honorary awards shall be agreed upon by a 2/3 majority of the convened Honorary Awards Sub-Committee, rounded down, and by no less than 6 members.
5. A revised report shall be authored by the investigating team, and forwarded to the Labor-Management Executive Committee with the following additions:
 - Recommendations – specific recommendations for honorary awards to individuals
 - Conclusion – a statement that the recommended honorary awards were the findings of the Board of Honorary Awards Sub-Committee.
6. The completed Honorary Awards Sub-Committee report shall be maintained in perpetuity in the office of the Fire Chief, available for review by members of the Honorary Awards Sub-Committee.

The Labor-Management Executive Committee will review the Honorary Awards Sub-Committee report. Their recommendations will be forwarded to the Board of Fire Commissioners for honorary award considerations and appropriate approval.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

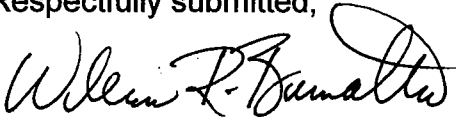
Section 16 of the Rules and Regulations defining Honorary Awards needs to be revised to reflect the changes mentioned above. Attached are the recommended revisions.

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CONCLUSION

The Honorary Awards process and awards have been revised to ensure that members of the Department are appropriately recognized for meritorious conduct and/or extraordinary service in a more timely and appropriate manner.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William R. Bamattre". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

WILLIAM R. BAMATTRE
Fire Chief

WRB:WNW

Attachment

RULES AND REGULATIONS

1-06

Section 16. Honorary Awards

- a. In recognition of meritorious conduct or extraordinary service, Awards of Decoration or Letters of Special Commendation may be granted.
- b. A Board of Honorary Awards *Sub-Committee*, shall consist of *twelve Department members, including four members representing the United Firefighters of Los Angeles City, four members representing the Chief Officers Association, and four members representing Management.* ~~one Deputy Chief, one additional member from the Chief officer rank, and one member from the rank of Captain or below.~~ The Board shall promptly and thoroughly investigate any report of meritorious act(s) and determine an award commensurate with the deed. Upon completion of the investigation, the Board will submit a report in detail of its findings and recommendations to the ~~Fire Chief Labor-Management Executive Committee.~~
- c. The Board of Fire Commissioners may confer awards on their own motion or upon recommendation of the Fire Chief which may be based on findings by a the Board of Honorary Awards *Sub-Committee*. Posthumous awards to relatives of deceased members shall be made at times and places designated by the Board of Fire Commissioners.

AWARDS OF DECORATION

Medal of Valor: The Medal of Valor Award shall be awarded to sworn personnel who have demonstrated bravery at great personal risk to his or her own life, beyond a doubt and clearly above the call of duty, whether on or off duty. A member is entitled to consideration for this award by performing an act of conspicuous heroism and /or bravery under extreme personal risk above and beyond the calculated personal risk demands of the fire service. A member receiving the Medal of Valor shall also receive a Certificate of Valor, A Medal of Valor Pin, a Resolution of Valor, and have their name inscribed on the Roll of Merit Honor.

Medal of Merit: The Medal of Merit shall be awarded to sworn personnel who distinguish themselves by performing an act where the member's actions, if not taken, would have resulted in serious injury or present imminent danger to life. The member must have demonstrated a conspicuous act of bravery with calculated personal risk to his or her own life. A member receiving the Medal of Merit shall also receive a Certificate of Merit, A Medal of Merit Pin, a Resolution of Merit, and have their name inscribed on the Roll of Merit.

~~Award of Merit: Members taking conspicuous action in rendering aid during a life-saving or life-threatening situation under circumstance: which pose calculated risk to the members, or performing an endeavor which brings significant credit to the Fire Department, are entitled to consideration for this award. A member receiving the Award of Merit shall also receive a Certificate of Merit.~~

Phoenix Award: The Phoenix Award shall be awarded to sworn personnel that perished as a result of a duty related death. The Phoenix Award shall be presented posthumously to the member's surviving family designee.

- d. Letter of Special Commendation: An act performed by any Department member of unusual character during emergency or non-emergency conditions, requiring initiative or ability worthy of recognition entitles a member to consideration for this commendation. Qualifying members shall receive a Letter of Special Commendation from the Fire Chief, which may or may not be based on findings by a the Board of Honorary Awards Sub-Committee.