

# Georgia Department of Public Safety Policy Manual

SUBJECT <b>DEPARTMENT AWARDS PROGRAM</b>	POLICY NUMBER <b>20.01</b>
DISTRIBUTION <b>SWORN EMPLOYEES</b>	REVISED DATE <b>3/31/2026</b>
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## 20.01.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish an awards program for the members of the Georgia Department of Public Safety (DPS).

## 20.01.2 Policy

DPS recognizes members who have performed meritorious acts or displayed consistent exemplary performance in the course of their official duties. This policy shall provide the Department with an equitable method for submitting and processing nominations for the awards mentioned below.

## 20.01.3 Awards Ceremonies

An award ceremony will be conducted annually at a date, time, and location determined by the DPS Commissioner.

## 20.01.4 Nominations

- A. Nominations for awards shall be submitted digitally, once approved by Troop/Region/Unit Command, on the web form located on the DPS Applications page, immediately following a meritorious incident.
- B. Nominations for awards shall include a written statement by the person nominating to fully document the circumstances surrounding the rationale for the submission. An incident or crash report alone is not considered sufficient documentation for a submission. Where possible, statements from witnesses, medical personnel, and others who can attest to the nominee's actions should be included.
- C. The incident for which the member is nominated must have occurred during the current calendar year unless extenuating circumstances caused a delay to submissions. All nominations shall be received by the deadline announced annually by the Deputy Commissioner.
- D. A member may not make a self-nomination.

## 20.01.5 Awards

- A. The following awards shall be presented to members in accordance with guidelines established in Section 20.01.6:

1. Valor Award
2. Lifesaving Award
3. Purple Heart Award
4. Commissioner's Commendation
5. Safe Driver Ribbon
6. Employee Recognition Award
7. Commissioner's Citation for Distinguished Service
8. Military Branch of Service Ribbon
9. Public Service Award
10. Colonel's Leadership Award
11. Commissioner's Special Recognition Award
12. Troop Outstanding Achievement Award
13. Post of the Year Award
14. Troop of the Year Award
15. Trooper of the Year Award
16. Region Outstanding Achievement Award
17. Station of the Year Award
18. Region of the Year Award
19. Commercial Vehicle Officer of the Year Award
20. Weight Inspector Outstanding Achievement Award
21. Weight Inspector of the Year
22. Capitol Police Officer of the Year
23. Dispatcher Outstanding Achievement Award
24. Dispatcher of the Year
25. Top Performer Awards
  - a. Georgia State Patrol
    - 1) Top Three DUI (excluding Nighthawks)
    - 2) Top DUI Nighthawk
    - 3) Top Three Occupant Protection

- 4) Top Three Speed Detection
  - 5) Top Three Distracted Driving
  - 6) Top Performer – Post 50 Capitol Hill
- b. Commercial Vehicle Enforcement
- 1) Top Three DUI
  - 2) Top Three Occupant Protection
  - 3) Top Three Speed Detection
  - 4) Top Three Distracted Driving
  - 5) MCSAP Enforcement Officer of the Year
- B. The aforementioned award nominations will be presented to a committee appointed by the Commissioner. The recommendations by the committee will be forwarded to the Commissioner for final approval.
- C. Consideration for the MCSAP Enforcement Officer of the Year award is based on an officer's demonstrated excellence in enforcement efforts related to commercial motor vehicle (CMV) operations and size and weight enforcement. Evaluation will include documented enforcement activity, including inspections, violations, and overall CMV enforcement productivity. Data will be derived from CMV inspection software (e.g., SafeSpect) and other FMCSA data sources, along with size and weight enforcement reporting sources.

### **20.01.6 Awards Criteria**

- A. Valor Award
1. The Valor Award is presented to a sworn member who has displayed courage, fortitude and has performed a duty well beyond that which would reasonably be expected in a tense or emergency situation. The circumstances of the event must have placed the sworn member's life in jeopardy.
  2. The Valor Award may be presented to a civilian member in special circumstances.
  3. Documentation shall clearly indicate the circumstances under which the nominee's life was placed in jeopardy.
  4. The Valor Award consists of an engraved plaque and ribbon.
- B. Lifesaving Award
1. The Lifesaving Award is presented to a sworn or civilian member who saves or prolongs the life of another. Merely calling for assistance, providing NARCAN, or applying an AED, is considered an essential function of a sworn member's job and does not, by itself, qualify for this award.
  2. Medical statements should accompany nominations documenting the member's actions clearly saved or prolonged the victim's life. For incidents not involving medical actions, statements from other law enforcement officers and/or witnesses should be submitted.

3. The Lifesaving Award consists of an engraved plaque and ribbon.

C. Purple Heart Award

1. The Purple Heart Award is awarded to a sworn member who has been injured in the line of duty. The injury must have been through no fault of their own and in the competent execution of their official duty.
2. The injuries may take place off duty if the member is acting in their official capacity as a law enforcement officer and not in such a manner as to disgrace either their oath of office or the Department.
3. The injuries must be of sufficient seriousness as to require hospitalization or comparable medical treatment.
4. The Purple Heart Award consists of a certificate and a ribbon.

D. Commissioner's Commendation

1. Law Enforcement Excellence:

The Commissioner's Commendation is presented to a sworn member for acts that display ability, skill and devotion to duty while executing an arrest, or performing an act beyond the call of duty which reflects great credit upon the member and the Department.

2. All sworn or civilian members:

The Commissioner's Commendation is presented to a member for acts that display ability, skill, and devotion to duty through the implementation of programs or support of programs which reflect great credit upon the Department or provide significant benefit to the overall mission of the Department.

3. The member exemplifies the Department's Core Values (Trust, Fortitude, Compassion and Professionalism.)
4. The Commissioner's Commendation consists of a certificate and ribbon.

E. Safe Driver Ribbon

1. The Safe Driver Ribbon is presented in five-year increments (5, 10, 15, 20, 25 and 30) to a sworn member who has operated a departmental vehicle safely and has not been at fault in a traffic crash during the specified time period.
2. The time period begins to accrue when the member is issued a Departmental vehicle. No nominations shall be made until the member has actually accrued the number of years without being at fault in a traffic crash.
3. All Safe Driver ribbons will be sent to the recipient's direct supervisor for presentation.
4. Once a specific Safe Driver ribbon has been awarded, the member shall not lose the right to wear the ribbon if at fault in a subsequent departmental vehicle crash. However, the member shall lose all years accrued toward the next highest Safe Driver ribbon and must begin to restart accrual of years towards that ribbon.

F. Employee Recognition Award

1. The Employee Recognition Award recognizes an individual or team who displays outstanding performance and efficiency in all job tasks and related duties for the calendar year.
2. The Employee Recognition Award consists of a certificate.

G. Public Service Award

1. The Public Service Award is presented to any group or organization that has contributed significantly to traffic safety or law enforcement in general.
2. Any member may submit a nomination for the Public Service Award.
3. The Public Service Award is presented at the discretion of the Commissioner.
4. The Public Service Award consists of an engraved plaque.

H. Commissioner's Citation for Distinguished Service

1. The Commissioner's Citation for Distinguished Service is presented to a non-departmental individual who has rendered outstanding service or assistance to a sworn member of the Department while that member was performing a law enforcement duty. The nominee must have contributed substantially toward the sworn member being able to complete his/her law enforcement duty successfully or have taken actions above and beyond what would normally be expected of an individual in similar conditions.
2. The award is presented to an individual who may or may not be associated with a public safety organization.
3. Nominations for the award may be submitted by any member who has knowledge of the incident.
4. Presentation of the award by the Commissioner may be made at an appropriate local ceremony or at the Department awards ceremony.
5. The Commissioner's Citation for Distinguished Services consists of an engraved plaque.

I. Military Branch of Service Ribbon

1. Military Branch of Service ribbons are presented to sworn members who have served in one of the branches of the military which includes Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard.
2. If no longer on active duty, the sworn member must provide evidence of an honorable discharge.
3. A memorandum must be submitted, through the chain of command, to the Public Information Office with a copy of the DD-214 form (military service record).

J. Colonel's Leadership Award

1. The Colonel's Leadership Award is presented annually at the discretion of the Commissioner to a sworn or civilian supervisor who has displayed outstanding leadership.

2. Any member may submit recommendations for a candidate for this award to the Commissioner's Office.
3. The Colonel's Leadership Award consists of an engraved plaque.

K. Commissioner's Special Recognition Award

1. The Commissioner's Special Recognition Award is presented to any member or non-departmental individual at the discretion of the Commissioner.
2. Any member may submit recommendations for a candidate for this award to the Commissioner's Office.
3. The Commissioner's Special Recognition Award consists of an engraved plaque.

L. Troop Outstanding Achievement Award

1. The Troop Outstanding Achievement Award is presented annually to a Trooper who has displayed initiative, leadership, character, integrity, and whose outstanding work performance has exemplified the Department's core values.
2. Nominations for the award shall be submitted by the Post Commander or his/her designee. The nomination shall be submitted to the Troop Commander through the nominee's chain of command.
3. The Troop Commander shall select the recipient of this award each calendar year. The nominee shall be submitted digitally through the web form immediately following his/her selection.
4. The award recipient from each Troop shall be nominated for the Trooper of the Year Award.
5. The Troop Outstanding Achievement Award consists of an engraved plaque.

M. Post of the Year Award

1. The Post of the Year is an annual award that recognizes the Post that best supports the goals, objectives and strategies established by the Department.
2. Nominations for the award shall be made by the Troop Commander or his/her designee.
3. The Georgia State Patrol Command staff shall select the recipient of this award each calendar year.
4. The award consists of an engraved plaque and a framed pennant.

N. Troop of the Year Award

1. The Troop of the Year is an annual award that recognizes the Troop that best supports the goals, objectives and strategies established by the Department.
2. Nominations for the award shall be made by the Troop Commander or his/her designee.
3. The Georgia State Patrol Command staff shall select the recipient of this award each calendar year.

4. The award consists of an engraved plaque and a framed pennant.

O. Trooper of the Year Award

1. The Georgia State Patrol Troop Outstanding Achievement Award recipient from each troop shall be nominated for the Georgia State Patrol Trooper of the Year Award.
2. The Georgia State Patrol Command staff shall select the recipient of this award each calendar year.
3. The Georgia State Patrol Trooper of the Year Award consists of an engraved plaque and uniform ribbon engraved with the year.

P. Region Outstanding Achievement Award

1. The Region Outstanding Achievement Award is presented annually to an officer who has displayed initiative, leadership, character, integrity, and whose outstanding work performance has exemplified the Department's core values.
2. Nominations for the award shall be submitted by the Station Commander or his/her designee. The nomination shall be submitted to the Region Commander through the nominee's chain of command.
3. The Region Commander shall select the recipient of this award each calendar year. The nominee shall be submitted digitally through the web form immediately following his/her selection.
4. The award recipient from each region shall be nominated for the Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Officer of the Year Award.
5. The Region Outstanding Achievement Award consists of an engraved plaque.

Q. Station of the Year Award

1. The Station of the Year is an annual award that recognizes the Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Station that best supports the goals, objectives and strategies established by the Department.
2. Nominations for the award shall be submitted by the Region Commander or his/her designee.
3. The CVE Command staff shall select the recipient of this award each calendar year.
4. The award consists of an engraved plaque and a framed pennant.

R. Region of the Year Award

1. The Region of the Year is an annual award that recognizes the Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Region that best supports the goals, objectives and strategies established by the Department.
2. Nominations for the award shall be submitted by the Region Commander or his/her designee.

3. The CVE Command staff shall select the recipient of this award each calendar year.
  4. The award consists of an engraved plaque and a framed pennant.
- S. Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Officer of the Year
1. The Region Outstanding Achievement Award recipient from each region shall be nominated for the Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Officer of the Year Award.
  2. The CVE Command staff shall select the recipient of this award each calendar year.
  3. The Commercial Vehicle Officer of the Year Award consists of an engraved plaque and uniform ribbon engraved with the year.
- T. Region Weight Inspector Outstanding Achievement Award
1. The Region Weight Inspector Outstanding Achievement Award is presented annually to a Weight Inspector who has displayed initiative, leadership, character, integrity, and whose outstanding work performance has exemplified the Department's core values.
  2. Nominations for the award shall be submitted by the Station Commander or his/her designee. The nomination shall be submitted to the Region Commander through the nominee's chain of command.
  3. The Region Commander shall select the recipient of this award each calendar year. The nominee shall be submitted digitally through the web form immediately following his/her selection.
  4. The award recipient from each region shall be nominated for the Weight Inspector of the Year Award.
  5. The Region Weight Inspector Outstanding Achievement Award consists of an engraved plaque.
- U. Weight Inspector of the Year
1. The Region Weight Inspector Outstanding Achievement Award recipient from each region shall be nominated for the Weight Inspector of the Year Award.
  2. The CVE Command staff shall select the recipient of this award each calendar year.
  3. The Weight Inspector of the Year Award consists of an engraved plaque.
- V. Safety Compliance Specialist of the Year
1. The CVE Command staff shall select the recipient of this award from civilian ranks in Regulatory Compliance each calendar year.
  2. The Safety Compliance Specialist of the Year Award consists of an engraved plaque.
- W. Capitol Police Officer of the Year

1. The Capitol Police Officer of the Year is presented annually to a Capitol Police Officer who has displayed initiative, leadership, character, integrity, and whose outstanding work performance has exemplified the Department's core values.
2. Nominations for the award shall be submitted by Capitol Police Command to the Director of the Capitol Police Division.
3. The Director of the Capitol Police Division shall select the recipient of this award each calendar year. The name must be submitted to the Commissioner's Office through the chain of command immediately following its selection.
4. If a Georgia State Patrol Trooper earns the Capitol Police Officer of the Year Award, he/she shall be considered for the Trooper of the Year Award.
5. The Capitol Police Officer of the Year Award consists of an engraved plaque and uniform ribbon engraved with the year.

X. Troop Dispatcher Outstanding Achievement Award

1. The Troop Dispatcher Outstanding Achievement Award is presented annually to a Dispatcher who has displayed initiative, leadership, character, integrity, and whose outstanding work performance has exemplified the Department's core values.
2. Nominations for the award may be made by the Troop Communications Chief Dispatcher. The nomination shall be submitted to the Troop Commander through the nominee's chain of command.
3. The Troop Commander shall select the recipient of this award each calendar year. The nominee shall be submitted digitally through the web form immediately following his/her selection.
4. The award recipient from each Troop shall be nominated for the Dispatcher of the Year Award.
5. The Dispatcher Outstanding Achievement Award consists of an engraved plaque.

Y. Troop Dispatcher of the Year

1. The Troop Dispatcher Outstanding Achievement Award recipient from each troop shall be nominated for the Dispatcher of the Year Award.
2. The Georgia State Patrol Command staff shall select the recipient of this award each calendar year.
3. The Dispatcher of the Year Award consists of an engraved plaque.

Z. Top Performer Awards

1. The Top Performer Awards listed in section 20.01.5. A will be presented to sworn members who have excelled in the identified traffic enforcement area throughout the year.
2. All Top Performer Awards will be given based on quantitative uniform traffic citation (UTC) data compiled by the DPS Information Technology Division, CVE Command Staff on January 8, or the next business day if January 8 falls on a weekend or holiday.

3. The following Code sections shall be used for the DUI Top Performer Award query: O.C.G.A. 40-6-391(a)(1-5), 40-6-391(a)(1), 40-6-391(a)(2), 40-6-391(a)(3), 40-6-391(a)(4), 40-6-391(a)(5), 40-6-391(a)(6), 40-6-391(c), 40-6-391(l), 40-6-391(k), 40-6-391(k)(1).
4. The following Code sections shall be used for the Occupant Protection Top Performer Award query: O.C.G.A. 40-8-76.1, 40-8-76(b)(1), 40-8-76(e)(3), and 40-1-8(h)(2).
5. The following Code sections shall be used for the Speed Detection Top Performer Award query: O.C.G.A. 40-6-181 & 40-6-188.
6. The following Code sections shall be used for the Distracted Driving Top Performer Award query: O.C.G.A. 40-6-241, 40-6-241(b), 40-6-241(c)(1), 40-6-241(c)(2), 40-6-241(c)(3), 40-6-241(c)(4), 40-6-241(d)(1), 40-6-241(d)(2), 40-6-241.1(b), 40-6-241.2(b).
7. The Top Performer Award consists of an engraved plaque.
8. Eligibility for the CVE Top DUI Performers Award shall be determined based on enforcement activity, with no less than fifty-one percent (51%) of an officer's DUI arrests attributed to commercial motor vehicle enforcement.

## **20.01.7 Wearing of the Ribbons**

### **A. Precedence of Ribbons**

The Valor Ribbon is the highest ribbon awarded by the Department. Ribbons authorized for issue, in descending precedence, are Lifesaving, Purple Heart, Commissioner's Commendation, Safe Driver, and Military Branch of Service ribbons.

### **B. Placement of the Ribbons on Uniform**

The ribbons shall be worn above the right shirt pocket and placed above the nameplate so that the bottom edge of the ribbon is even with the uppermost edge of the pocket flap. Ribbons will only be awarded three times for an award per applicable category. A member may be nominated and receive recognition for additional events, but the ribbon will not change after the third award.

1. The placement of the ribbons shall be from left to right when facing the shirt. The ribbons shall be placed in order of precedence with the highest precedence on the extreme left followed by the second and third highest precedence ribbon awarded.
2. When wearing one ribbon, it shall be centered above the buttonhole of the pocket. When wearing two ribbons, they shall meet at their edges and the point when they join shall be centered above the buttonhole of the pocket. When wearing three ribbons, the center ribbon shall be centered above the buttonhole of the pocket and the center ribbon shall meet the edges of the ribbons to its left and right.
3. A maximum of three ribbons shall be worn on the uniform shirt; regardless of the number a member has been awarded. The ribbons shall be the highest precedence awarded to the member.

## **20.01.8 Awards Preparation**

- A. The DPS Awards Program Committee, designated by the Commissioner, is responsible for the planning and preparing for the awards ceremonies. The DPS Awards Program Committee will prepare for the ceremonies from the awards nominations submitted and approved by the Commissioner.
- B. Requests for replacement ribbons shall be made in a memo through the member's chain of command. Approved requests shall be forwarded to the Public Information Office for fulfillment.
- C. The Public Information Office shall forward the award recipients' information to the Human Resources Division for inclusion in the employees' personnel files.