

CITY OF SAN DIEGO  
ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION

SUBJECT  EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AND AWARD PROGRAMS	Number 95.91	Issue 7	Page 1 of 12
	Effective Date July 21, 1989		

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To establish a service award program recognizing employees with meritorious long-term service.
- 1.2 To establish guidelines and procedures to be used by appointing authorities in issuing commendations to employees.
- 1.3 To establish guidelines and procedures to be used by appointing authorities in granting leave with pay to employees for exceptional performance.
- 1.4 To establish guidelines and procedures to be used by appointing authorities in the nomination of employees for cash payments under the exceptional merit pay plan. This plan is not part of nor should be confused with the “exceptional merit (step) increase” provided for in Section H-8 of the Personnel Manual.
- 1.5 To provide for specialized employee award programs based on individual department or section goals in areas such as productivity, safety, loss prevention, and public and/or customer service.

2. POLICY

2.1 Service Awards

At the completion of each five-year period of service, City employees shall be presented with service awards in appreciation for their years of service. These awards shall be presented by the employee’s department.

2.2 Commendations

Employees performing duties or extra duties in a meritorious manner may be recognized by appointing authorities with written commendations which shall be a part of the employee’s personnel file. On a case-by-case basis, the Department Director, at his or her discretion, may provide a reasonable reward (e.g. lunch, plaque, etc.) To a deserving employee in recognition of exceptional performance consistent with Administrative Regulation 95.40.

(Supersedes Administrative Regulation 95.91, Issue 6, dated November 15, 1988)

Authorized

(Signed by John Lockwood)

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CITY MANAGER

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2.3 Leave with Pay for Exceptional Performance

All employees shall be eligible for leave with pay of up to three (3) consecutive days for instances of exceptional performance in their class of employment.

2.4 Exceptional Merit Cash Payments Program

a. Eligible employees (see Section 6.1 for eligibility criteria) may be awarded cash payments for exceptional performance in their class of employment. Awards will be given in net amounts of \$250, \$500, \$750, or \$1,000 unless a different amount is provided in a Specialized Employee Award Program as provided for in Section 2.5. An employee shall not be given cash awards totaling more than a net amount of \$1,000 during any fiscal year.

b. Employees may qualify for a cash award on the basis of Exceptional Sustained Performance and/or Exceptional Performance on a project or assignment.

2.5 Specialized Employee Award Program

Specialized employee award programs established to recognize exceptional employee performance in areas such as productivity, safety, loss prevention and public and/or customer service shall be approved by the City Manager. Approved programs providing for specialized employee awards shall be filed with the Labor Relations Manager in the Manager's Office.

3. CRITERIA AND PROCEDURE FOR SERVICE AWARDS

3.1 Criteria

At the completion of each five-year period of service, City employees shall be presented with service awards in appreciation for their years of service.

3.2 Procedure

a. The Personnel Department will send a service award listing to each department head at least six weeks in advance of each employee becoming eligible for an award.

b. Upon receipt of the service award listing, the department may order awards from Central Stores. Brochures containing Service Award Program information and award selections are available through Central Stores.

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- c. The type of presentation ceremony is left to the discretion of the department or division head. Presentations should, however, be made in a timely manner and at least by a person of the division head level. (See attached employee recognition guidelines for service).

4. CRITERIA AND PROCEDURE FOR COMMENDATIONS

4.1 Criteria

Each appointing authority is the best judge of work standards in his or her department and shall be responsible for issuing commendations in an appropriate manner.

4.2 Procedure

- a. Each department may establish its own format for commendations and the manner of presentation of the employee.
- b. Commendations will be given to the employee(s) and copies placed in their departmental and central personnel files.

5. CRITERIA AND PROCEDURE FOR LEAVE WITH PAY FOR EXCEPTIONAL PERFORMANCE

5.1 Eligibility

- a. All employees shall be eligible for leave with pay for up to three (3) consecutive days for instances of exceptional performance in their class of employment.

5.2 Standards

- a. Each appointing authority is the best judge of work standards and performance in his or her department and will be responsible for granting of leave with pay for exceptional performance.
- b. The exceptional performance which resulted in leave with pay being granted shall be documented by the appointing authority.

5.3 Procedure

a. General

- 1. Appointing authorities shall be the approving authority for granting of leave with pay for exceptional performance.

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2. The granting of leave with pay for exceptional performance is discretionary on the part of appointing authorities, and the granting or non-granting of leave with pay under this policy shall not be grievable.
3. Leave with pay granted under this section shall be taken when granted and shall not be accrued.

b. Specific

Responsibility

Action

Appointing Authority

1. The appointing authority evaluates the employee's performance either as an individual or a member of a work group and, if appropriate, grants up to three (3) days leave with pay. Discretionary leave must be taken within a reasonable time after it is granted.
2. The appointing authority notifies the employee of the determination to grant leave with pay and the number of hours granted.
3. The appointing authority documents the reasons for granting leave with pay for exceptional performance. The employee should be provided a copy, a copy should be forwarded to the employee's personnel file, and a copy retained by the appointing authority.
4. The appointing authority, each six (6) months, provides the City Manager with a report on the number of days leave with pay granted; the employees by classification granted leave; and the number of days granted each employee. Upon request, appointing authorities shall provide the City Manager the reason for granting an employee or employees leave with pay for exceptional performance.

City Manager

5. The City Manager shall review the reports submitted by the appointing authorities for Citywide consistency and conformity with this policy.

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6. CRITERIA AND PROCEDURE FOR EXCEPTIONAL MERIT CASH PAYMENTS

6.1 Eligibility

- a. All employees shall be equally eligible for the maximum payments, except as specified below.
  - 1. An employee could be eligible under both Exceptional Sustained Performance and Exceptional Performance on a Project or Assignment Basis, but in no event shall a single employee receive cash awards totaling more than a net amount of \$1,000 in any fiscal year.
  - 2. Employees in the Police Officer Bargaining Unit and the Fire Fighter Bargaining Unit are ineligible for this program.
  - 3. Classified employees must be at E step of their job classification. Classified employees who are not at E step, but would otherwise be recommended for an Exceptional merit Cash Payment, should be considered for an Exceptional Merit Increase. Unclassified employees may be at any step within their salary ranges.

6.2 Standards

- a. Each appointing authority is the best judge of work performance in his or her department and will be responsible for nominating employees as individuals or as a work unit. Ordinarily, only a small number of employees in any work group will qualify for exceptional performance cash awards. Employees nominated for cash awards should clearly stand out from their peers as exceptional performers. (Normally, these employees would be identified by their peer group as well as their superiors).
- b. Employees must have identifiable and specific accomplishments.
- c. The employee's exceptional performance must be documented.
- d. Accomplishments may be in the form of work simplification or safety ideas proposed by the employee. Proposed ideas for which the employee has received (or is about to receive) payment from the Suggestion Awards Program should not also be considered as primary justification for a merit award.

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1. Exceptional Sustained Performance

Employees whose performance exceeds the standards for their position to an exceptional degree over a substantial rating period, usually one year, may be nominated for a cash award. Appointing authorities nominating an employee under this action must clearly document how the employee's performance has exceeded the performance standards for the employee's class to an exceptional degree. Normally, the Annual Performance Report serves as documentation.

2. Exceptional Performance on a Project or Assignment

Employees who complete a project, assignment, or set of assignments in an exceptional manner may be nominated by appointing authorities for a cash award. Such nominations must be accompanied by documentation clearly setting forth the nature of the project or assignment(s) and in what manner the employee's performance was exceptional in completing the project or assignment(s).

6.3 Procedure

a. General

1. The City Manager shall be the approving authority for nominations by managerial departments. The directors of non-managerial departments shall be the approving authority for their respective departments. The City Manager or non-managerial department director shall reserve the sole discretion to make the final decision on awards. Nominations shall be submitted to the City Manager no later than June 1 of the fiscal year in which the exceptional merit cash payment is to be awarded.
2. The City Manager or non-managerial department director shall ensure that payments are made in a fair and impartial manner.
3. The amount of cash payment shall not add to the base pay.
4. The payments are discretionary on the part of the City Manager or non-managerial department directors, and the granting or non-granting of payments under this policy shall not be grievable.

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5. Once a year, the City Manager shall provide a report to the Mayor and City Council advising them of the experience in terms of amount and distribution of the awards by classification.

b. Specific

Responsibility

Action

Appointing Authority

1. Each appointing authority will evaluate and nominate eligible employees, as individuals or a work unit for the exceptional merit cash award.
2. The appointing authority will complete the Exceptional Merit Cash Payment Nomination Form and must include a description of:
  - a. Accomplishments and a statement which explains in what way the employee has been outstanding in relation to others in the same class of employment. Descriptions of accomplishments in the form of work simplification or safety ideas should include an estimate of dollar savings, cost avoidance benefit, or increase in revenue, if applicable.
  - b. A recommendation for the **net** amount of the award.
3. Attaches a copy of the employee's performance evaluation completed within the last rating period and forwards package to department director. Because this is a nomination, appointing authorities should not discuss the nomination with the employee prior to the City Manager or non-managerial department director's decision.

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Responsibility

Action

Department Director

4. Reviews, approves/disapproves nomination:
  - a. Directors of managerial departments forward two copies of approved nomination(s) to the City Manager for final approval.
  - b. Directors of non-managerial departments:
    1. Send two copies of the approved nomination form to the City Manager for review for consistency and for forwarding to the Auditor and Comptroller to initiate payment.
    2. Notify employee of the award and provide for appropriate recognition.

City Manager

5. Reviews, approves/disapproves nomination(s) of managerial departments and:
  - a. Notifies departments of decision.
  - b. If the award is approved, forwards a copy of the approved nomination form to the Auditor and Comptroller to initiate payment.
  - c. If the approved award is based on a suggestion which might also be submitted through the Suggestion Awards Program, forwards a copy to Risk Management Department. (Awards in this category approved by non-managerial directors will also be forwarded).

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Responsibility

Action

Managerial Directors

6. Upon notification of approval by the City Manager, notify employee and provide for appropriate recognition. In order to be effective, presentation of awards must avoid demotivating other employees while recognizing the exceptional performers. Recognition may be made on an individual or group basis. No announcement of the amounts of individual awards should be made. Occasionally, it may be appropriate to recognize exceptional performers in staff-type meetings. If a staff-type meeting is to be used, employees should be notified of the purpose of the meeting and attendance must be voluntary.

No surprises should occur, such as employees expecting but not receiving an award.

City Auditor

7. After receiving approved copy of Exceptional Merit Cash Payment Nomination Form, makes appropriate payment less the required withholding for Medicare, state, and federal taxes. Includes the amount awarded on employee's W-2 Form.

7. SPECIALIZED EMPLOYEE AWARD PROGRAMS

7.1 Scope

Each City Department is encouraged to establish a specialized employee recognition program in areas such as productivity, safety, loss prevention and public and/or customer service.

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7.2 Criteria

- a. In designing such a program, the department should stipulate:
1. Eligible classifications.
  2. Specific measurable levels of performance which will be required for an award.
  3. A time frame during which performance levels will be measured.
  4. Plans for public recognition.
  5. The award which will be provided.

7.3 Types of Awards

The types of awards utilized in these programs may include cash or non-cash awards such as gift certificates, merchandise, tickets, dinners, lunches, etc. For cash awards, any one employee may receive a maximum (total/combined) net cash award of \$1,000 per fiscal year including any cash awarded under either Section 2.4 (Exceptional Merit Cash Payment Program) or Section 2.5 (Specialized Employee Award Programs) of this administrative regulation. For non-cash awards, a separate \$250 limit per fiscal year for each employee should be maintained. For example, in the course of a fiscal year, an outstanding employee could potentially receive a maximum of \$1,000 in cash and an additional maximum of \$250 based on the total/combined value of merchandise, gift certificates, etc. It should be noted that the value of non-cash awards will be reported as employee taxable income but the City will not require withholding. Each department director will be responsible for monitoring individual employee award values to assure compliance with the monetary limitations.

7.4 Procedure

Responsibility

Action

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|---------------------|---|
| Department Director | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Designs an applicable specialized award program.</li> <li>b. Submits the program to the City Manager for review and approval or disapproval.</li> </ol> |
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|---------------------|----|--|
| City Manager        | c. | Reviews the proposed program for appropriateness and approves or disapproves.                |
|                     | d. | If program is approved, forwards a copy to the City Auditor for review.                      |
| City Auditor        | e. | Reviews the proposed program for compliance with the City Charter and state and federal law. |
|                     | f. | Makes suggestions for alternative awards or methodology if appropriate.                      |
|                     | g. | Sets up a method of payment.   |
| Department Director | h. | Submits and files a reference copy of the approved program with the Labor Relations Manager. |

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APPENDIX

Legal References

Section H-8, City of San Diego Personnel Regulations, “Exceptional Merit Increase”

Annual Salary Ordinance

Forms Involved

CM-1550 – “Exceptional Merit Cash Payment Nomination Form”

CS-95 – “Employee Performance Report”

Subject Index

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Awards - Service

Commendation - Employee

Leave with Pay

Merit - Employee Recognition

Performance - Employee Service Awards

Personnel - Employee Performance

Administering Department

City Manager

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION GUIDELINES FOR TENURE

<u>TENURE</u>	<u>SUGGESTED PRESENTATION*</u>
<u>Deputy Director and below (excluding hourly employees)</u>	
Achieve permanent status	Congratulations by 1st level supervisor at workgroup gathering.
5 and 10 years	Presentation of pin** by highest level supervisor possible, up to Deputy Director, at workgroup gathering: Presenter recounts employee work history.***
15 years	Presentation of pin by highest level supervisor possible, up to Department Director, at workgroup gathering. Deputy Director recounts employee work history.
20 years and above in 5 year increments	Presentation of pin by at least Department Director at either: (a) official division or department-wide meeting during business hours or (b) division or department sponsored luncheon including honoree and Deputy Director and above. Deputy Director recounts employee work history. If employee misses his/her scheduled luncheon due to illness or vacation, can attend next one.
Full retirement (not deferred retirement)	Presentation by Department Director or Assistant Director at official division or department-wide meeting during business hours or at a regularly scheduled 20+ year tenure luncheon:
10-24.9 years	Framed certificated of appreciation signed by Deputy Director and Department Director.
25+	Framed certificate of appreciation signed by Department Director and City Manager.

Hourly Employees at 5 year increments regardless of hours worked

Congratulations by 1st level supervisor at workgroup gathering.

Assistant Director at 5 year increments of tenure with the City

Recognition as determined by the Deputy City Manager.

Department Director at 5 year increments of tenure with the City

Recognition as determined by the Assistant City Manager at Department Head Retreat.

- \* Presentation should occur only with employee concurrence.
- \*\* "Pin" refers to any item in the service award catalog.
- \*\*\* "Work history" refers to dates, classifications, departments/divisions, special accomplishments, operational changes seen during tenure, etc.