

Commissioned Corps Honor Award Notes:

The CDC/ATSDR Awards Board is chaired by RADM Stephen Thacker, Director, EPO and has a representative from each CIO on that Board that reviews all honor awards. The CDC/ATSDR Awards Board has been granted approving authority for all lower level award nominations. High level award nominations must be approved by the PHS Commissioned Corps Awards Board in DC after approval by the CDC/ATSDR Board and thus take much longer before being awarded.

Awards are judged on scope of impact, level of achievement, leadership, and length of time involved. There are two key reasons that individual awards are returned: the specific role of the officer is not shown and the impact of the activity is not well defined. The specific role of the officer in the project or activity must be clearly explained. Include the time frame of the officer's role in the project to add clarity. It is not sufficient to say an officer led a project and then provide no further detail on what actually was involved in leading the project. Be sure to address any obstacles or difficulties the officer had to overcome and how the officer used his/her unique skills to address those barriers successfully. Use active verbs to describe what a person did.

The impact of the activity is important in judging the level of award. A common mistake is to restate accomplishments as impacts. Impact statements answer the question, "So what?" Emphasize the public health impact of the activity. Consider including changes in morbidity/mortality, changes in transmission of disease, protection of workers, and examples of how better data influenced policy, etc. It greatly strengthens an award if the nominator includes specific information, especially quantitative information, whenever possible and avoids terms like some, many, etc. Avoid the use of future tenses (e.g., "will") for impacts, as the Board will often suggest resubmitting the award after the impacts are realized.

General Notes on nominating:

- A. It is suggested that you write ideas for the nomination first then contact your CIO awards representative and ask their advice on the content of the award and the appropriate level of award. Failure to follow their advice increases the chance that your nomination will be bounced back or rejected. Their suggestions may seem trivial or irrelevant but remember that the Awards Boards like things in very specific ways.
- B. Nominations for honor awards must be formally initiated within 13 months after the period of service that is recognized.
- C. Nominations can be made by a supervisor, a fellow officer, or a co-worker. In the case of a unit award, the nominator should not be in the unit being recognized.
- D. Only one individual honor award may be approved for an officer each cycle (July 1 to June 30). This does not apply to unit awards, service awards, the Surgeon General's awards, or any awards for valor.
- E. If a nomination includes the work of several individuals, then a unit award should be submitted initially that focuses on the unit's accomplishments. Individual awards that focus on the work of unit members should focus on clarifying how that individual's achievements went over/above that of the other individuals involved.
- F. Awards must be based on achievements that have not been the basis for a previous award, unless it is for a higher level award that shows a higher level of achievement over a longer period of time. If that is the case, then the nomination must clarify the basis for the previous award and its relevance to the current nomination.
- G. The nomination should not be written in highly technical language. Remember that the DCP board consists of members from agencies, such as FDA or IHS, which may not be familiar with CDC-type

activities. The nomination should be more like a newspaper article than a scientific abstract so that officers from all backgrounds can understand the importance of the accomplishments and impact.

- H. The words in the narrative should be reflective of the words for the level of award, e.g., if the proposed award is an OSM for continuous outstanding leadership, then the text should focus on examples of leadership and use the terms that reflect leadership.
- I. Serving in an Acting capacity can warrant an award at the Citation level. To merit a higher level, increasing levels of impact must be shown.
- J. Activities such as organizing a meeting or conference are not generally recognized with individual honor awards.

Submitting the nomination

Each nomination must contain a correctly completed PHS 6342-1 (for individual awards) or PHS 6342-2 (for group awards) and a correctly formatted narrative of no more than two pages. The forms with the CDC sign-offs included can be found at <http://basis1.cdc.gov/BASIS/masombp/forms/eforms/DDD/1368>. Generic versions of the forms can be found at <http://dcp.psc.gov/DCPForms.asp>.

Completing form 6342:

- 1) Be sure the "period covered" includes month and year and that the nominator's signature was not more than 13 months after the period ended.
- 2) Make sure the text in the "cited for" box is 25 words or less.
- 3) Be sure all awards granted during the three years prior to the start date for this nomination, and any other awards that might be considered to overlap with this nomination are listed on page 2.
- 4) If civilians are included in a group award with commissioned officers, their names need to be listed on a separate sheet of paper (not as part of the narrative). After the names are listed, make a general statement of the type of award they have already received for this work (if applicable). For example, "the civilian members of this group received the _____ award for their participation in the group/team/unit (which ever)."

Formatting the narrative:

- 1) 2 page maximum; 1" margins
- 2) No less than a 10 point font will be accepted, though 12 point is easier to read; preferred fonts are courier, prestige, elite, arial, or times new roman.
- 3) Use rank throughout (CAPT, CDR, LCDR) – do not use "Dr.", "Ms.", "Mr." Etc.
- 4) Use of bullets is strongly recommended, but not required.
- 5) Make sure the citation in the narrative matches the "cited for" section of the form.

The CDC/ATSDR List of Award Board Representatives for Commissioned Officer awards.

<u>BOARD REPRESENTATIVES</u>	<u>CIO</u>
RADM Stephen Thacker	EPO
CAPT Virginia Lee	ATSDR
CAPT Ronald Moolenaar	EPO
CAPT Barbara Kilbourne	NCBDDD
CAPT Jeffery Sacks	NCCDPHP
CAPT Paul Garbe	NCEH
CAPT Mark Eberhardt	NCHSCDR
Mark Safran	NCHSTP

CAPT Joanna Buffington
CAPT Ruth Shults
CAPT Janet Saul
CAPT Douglas Sharpnack
CAPT Pamela Ching
LCDR David Ausdemore
Scott Drexler

NCID
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NIOSH
NIP
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PHPPO