

Subchapter 7: Non-Monetary Recognition

7-3. HONORARY RECOGNITION

a. Major Honor Awards. The Department's Honorary Awards Program provides for seven categories of awards to DOT employees. Except for the Secretary's Award for Excellence, these awards are available for employees at all grades. These awards include:

- The Secretary's Award for Outstanding Achievement;
- The Secretary's Award for Meritorious Achievement;
- The Secretary's Award for Valor;
- The Secretary's Award for Achievement in Equal Employment Opportunity;
- The Secretary's Award for Excellence;
- The Secretary's Award for Cost Avoidance, Reduction and Efficiency; and
- Award for Superior Achievement.

1. The Secretary's Award for Outstanding Achievement. (Gold Medal)

(a) This is the highest level award granted within the Department to civilian employees. It is granted by the Secretary for rare and distinguished contributions of major significance to the Department, the nation, or the world. No nominations will be solicited for this award.

(b) This award consists of a gold medal, lapel rosette and engraved plaque.

2. The Secretary's Award for Meritorious Achievement. (Silver Medal)

(a) This is the second highest level award within the Department for civilian employees. Departmental Officers and Heads of Operating Administrations may nominate candidates for the Meritorious Achievement Award which is conferred by the Secretary.

(b) Nominations for this award will be granted for meritorious contributions of unusual

value to the Department. Examples of such contributions include:

- (i) a very valuable contribution to science or technology with national or international scope;
- (ii) accomplishment of assigned duties in such an outstanding manner as to be clearly exceptional among all those who have performed similar duties;
- (iii) development and improvement of methods and procedures which have accomplished extraordinary results for the Department;
- (iv) eminent authorship;
- (v) exceptional outstanding leadership which resulted in the highly successful accomplishment of Departmental missions, the major redirection of objectives or accomplishments to meet unique or emergency situations; or
- (vi) contributions to the Department's equal employment opportunity program of an outstanding and distinctive character.

(c) This award consists of a silver medal, lapel rosette and engraved plaque.

3. The Secretary's Award for Valor.

(a) This is the highest Departmental Award for acts of heroism or courage involving great personal risk by civilian employees under unusual circumstances.

(b) To be eligible for nomination, an employee must have demonstrated outstanding courage and voluntary risk of personal safety in the face of danger in an emergency while on or off duty.

(c) This award consists of a medal, lapel rosette and engraved plaque.

4. The Secretary's Award for Achievement in Equal Employment Opportunity.

(a) This award demonstrates the value which top level management places upon employees,

supervisors and managers who actively and effectively participate in Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) activities. Employees whose primary job responsibility is in the EEO area are not eligible for this award. They should be considered for the Meritorious or Superior Achievement Awards in accordance with appropriate criteria for those awards.

(b) This award recognizes the Department's highest level of honor and recognition to those employees who have excelled in their efforts to promote equal opportunity while serving in positions that are not primarily EEO related.

(c) The criteria for the award are contained in FPM Chapter 713, Subchapter 5.

(d) This award consists of an engraved plaque.

5. The Secretary's Award for Excellence.

(a) Throughout the Department, there are employees in clerical, administrative, technical and general support positions whose work is basic to meeting the Department's goals. Some of these employees are high achievers, yet go unrecognized in the honorary awards program because the Meritorious and Superior Achievement Awards require wider impact for achievements than are generally available to this group of employees.

(b) Nominations are limited to career employees in grades GS-1 through GS-9 and wage grades WG-1 through WG-8.

(c) Nominations will be based on outstanding achievement of all major duties. All aspects of performance must not only far exceed normal requirements, but deserve special commendation. An employee need not have received the highest performance rating during the last rating period to be nominated for the Secretary's Award for Excellence providing he/she is performing at the level to earn such a rating at the time of the nomination.

(d) This award consists of an engraved plaque and a \$200 savings bond.

6. The Secretary's Award for Cost Avoidance, Reduction and Efficiency.

(a) This award recognizes individual employee accomplishments in Cost Avoidance, Reduction and Efficiency (CARE) within the Department of Transportation. Employees at all

grade and organizational levels who have excelled in their efforts in identifying and implementing cost avoidance, reduction and efficiency measures are eligible for this award.

(b) Nominations will be based on clearly demonstrated employee contributions which have provided new ideas and/or made significant changes to present methods which result in tangible savings to the Department. All nominations are reviewed by the CARE Committee for recommendations to the Secretary.

(c) This award consists of an engraved plaque.

7. Award for Superior Achievement.

(a) This is the highest level award that may be granted by the Heads of DOT Operating Administrations or Departmental Officers.

(b) The Superior Achievement Award should be based on one or more of the following criteria:

(i) performance of assigned tasks in such an exemplary manner as to set a record of achievement that will inspire other employees to improve the quantity and/or quality of their work.

(ii) demonstration of unusual initiative or skill in the development of new or improved work methods and procedures, or the conception of inventions which will result in substantial savings in manpower, time, space, materials or other items of expense or the improved safety or health of the work force.

(iii) notable authorship;

(iv) exceptional achievement which substantially contributed to the accomplishment of the Department's missions or major programs or achievements worthy of recognition as an incentive to others, or;

(v) significant achievements in support of the Department's equal employment opportunity program which may serve as an inspiration to others.

(c) This award consists of a bronze medal, lapel rosette and engraved plaque.

8. Other Operating Administrations and OST Awards.

In addition to the awards described above, other honorary awards (both in headquarters and the field) may be granted for achievements that do not merit one of the top awards. Such awards are to be established in accordance with published guidelines and procedures pre-

scribed internally by the Operating Administrations.

9. Annual Awards Ceremony.

(a) The Departmental Awards Ceremony is held in the fall of each year in Washington, D.C. The ceremony is designed as a showcase of Departmental activities that merited recognition during the past year.

(b) Details of the Awards Ceremony will be furnished to the Operating Administrations approximately 60 days prior to the ceremony.

(c) The Awards Ceremony is the appropriate time for recognizing employees through the above honorary awards with the exception of the Award for Superior Achievement which is granted separately whenever appropriate.

(d) Personnel who attend the Awards Ceremony shall be considered on duty if otherwise in a duty status. Award recipients from field units who are authorized to attend the ceremony shall be authorized necessary travel and per diem.

(e) There is no authority to provide payment of travel and transportation expenses for members of the immediate families of award recipients to attend award ceremonies. Such expenses are not considered necessary expenses under 5 U.S.C. 4503 (Comptroller General Decision No. B-166802 dated June 12, 1975).

10. Nomination Procedures.

(a) Nominations for the Meritorious Achievement, Valor, EEO Achievement and Excellence Awards shall be submitted through the normal administrative channels of OST or the Operating Administrations to the Assistant Secretary for Administration (Attention: Director of Personnel and Training) and shall contain the endorsement of the Head of Operating Administration or Departmental Officer as appropriate.

(b) Nominations will be submitted in four copies on DOT F 3200.2, Recommendation for Secretarial Award.

(c) Nominations may be submitted at any time throughout the year. However, unless circumstances warrant an exception, the

Secretary's honorary award nominations should be submitted during the annual call in the spring of each year for inclusion in the Annual Awards Ceremony.

(d) When there is more than one nomination from an Operating Administration or Departmental Office for a particular award, there should be a statement of the relative rank order of the nominations. This will provide the Awards Review Board and the Secretary with additional information in the event all nominees are not selected for an award.

(e) Nominations based primarily on long and faithful service, or constituting retirement testimonials, will not be approved. (See Section 7-4).

(f) An employee will receive only one DOT honorary award for a single achievement; however, more than one DOT honorary award may be given to an employee while serving in the same position if performance of that function is considered meritorious on more than one occasion. In instances when the recommended award is not approved, the employee may be considered for the next lower level of award.

(g) The Department's Honorary Awards Program establishes a prestigious means of recognizing exceptional individual employee accomplishments. Except for the CARE Award, nominations based on accomplishments by a group of employees is inappropriate and will not be approved. Also, in order to maintain the prestigious intent of the program, the Awards Review Board may at its discretion recommend to the Secretary, at the time nominations are solicited, the number of Secretarial awards by category and organization to be awarded each year.