



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
BUREAU OF NAVAL PERSONNEL
5720 INTEGRITY DRIVE
MILLINGTON, TN 38055-0000

BUPERSINST 12450.4D
BUPERS-05
30 May 2023

BUPERS INSTRUCTION 12450.4D

From: Chief of Naval Personnel

Subj: CIVILIAN AWARDS PROGRAM FOR THE BUREAU OF NAVAL PERSONNEL

Ref: (a) 5 CFR 451
(b) DoD Instruction 1400.25, Volume 451 of 4 November 2013
(c) DON Civilian Human Resources Manual
(d) OPNAVINST 1650.8D
(e) SECNAV memo for distribution (Subj: DON Civilian Service Commendation and Achievement Medals) of 24 Apr 2018
(f) SECNAV memo for distribution (Subj: Delegation of Authority to Approve Monetary Awards for Civilian Employees in the DON) of 4 February 2022

Encl: (1) Guidance for a Fair, Credible, and Transparent Awards Process
(2) Guidance for DON Civilian Service Commendation Medal (CSCM) and Civilian Service Achievement Medal (CSAM)

1. Purpose. The purpose of this instruction is to provide policies, procedures, and guidance for the Bureau of Naval Personnel (BUPERS) Civilian Awards Program per references (a) through (f). Major revisions to this instruction include changes to the civilian of the quarter (COQ) and civilian of the year (COY) eligibility requirements, special act award approval, and the addition of guidance for the Armed Forces Civilian Service Medal.

2. Cancellation. BUPERSINST 12450.4C.

3. Scope and Applicability. This instruction applies to BUPERS commands and its subordinate activities.

4. Policy. It is BUPERS policy to ensure an active civilian awards program be implemented and integrated, per references (a) through (f) and this instruction. Reference (c), subchapters 451.1 and 451.2, and references (d) through (f) are located at: [https://portal.secnav.navy.mil/orgs/MRA/DONHR/Performance Management/Pages/default.aspx](https://portal.secnav.navy.mil/orgs/MRA/DONHR/Performance%20Management/Pages/default.aspx). The following policies must be in place to establish an effective BUPERS Civilian Awards Program:

a. A command awards board must be established to review and endorse proposed civilian awards. The awards board will provide oversight of the BUPERS Civilian Awards Program. The eligibility requirements for the awards board are listed under 5c(1).

b. Award programs must be evaluated and assessed to ensure awards are used to motivate, recognize, and reward eligible personnel.

c. Awards will be granted commensurate with the value of the employee's contribution(s) and or accomplishment(s). Enclosure (1) provides guidance in determining award levels and on ensuring award level fairness within the organizations.

d. Awards criteria must be established for granting monetary or non-monetary awards for individual, team, or organizational achievements or contributions that do not discriminate against individuals based on race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, or disability.

5. Responsibilities

a. Chief of Naval Personnel (CHNAVPERS)

(1) Endorses award nominations that require Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) approval and

(2) Delegates authority, per references (a) through (f), to Deputy CHNAVPERS (DEP CHNAVPERS) to manage the BUPERS Civilian Awards Program.

b. DEP CHNAVPERS

(1) Issues guidance and procedures, per references (a) through (f), for the implementation and oversight of awards programs in BUPERS subordinate commands;

(2) Ensures awards programs are in place within BUPERS subordinate commands and that awards are used to motivate, recognize, and reward eligible employees; and

(3) Further delegates this authority to Assistant Deputy Chief of Naval Personnel/ Deputy Commander, Navy Personnel Command (ADCNP/DCNPC).

c. Commanding Officer (CO)

(1) Subordinate commands must establish an awards board headed by the CO or XO/deputy with the remaining members being comprised of senior leaders within the organization;

(2) Reports composition of the awards board members to BUPERS-05 for approval by ADCNP/DCNPC;

(3) Assigns an awards coordinator to manage the awards budget and to act as a liaison between the activity, command or department, and BUPERS Total Force Human Resources and Manpower Office (BUPERS-05);

(4) Encourages recognition of top civilian performers throughout the year; and

(5) Rewards superior performance and presents cash awards or other tangible incentives (e.g., time-off, certificates, etc.).

d. Awards Board

(1) Reviews and recommends approval for time-off awards up to 60 hours cumulative, Federal Executive Association (FEA) awards, COQ and COY awards, military cash and beneficial suggestion awards, and monetary awards up to \$3500 , whether individually or as a result of multiple awards;

(2) Reviews all awards for equity and consistency in the Awards System;

(3) Meets, as necessary, at the convening of the chairperson; and

(4) Reviews recommendations for all honorary and non-monetary awards, as needed or as requested by BUPERS-05.

e. BUPERS-05

(1) Acts as the BUPERS Awards Program Manager;

(2) Advises and provides guidance on civilian awards to DEP CHNAVPERs, DCNPC/ADCNP, activity heads, COs, DHs, managers, and supervisors;

(3) Communicates and solicits nominations to BUPERS and its subordinate commands for recurring award programs;

(4) Reviews, processes, and finalizes all awards packages; and

(5) Endorses award submissions, per references (a) through (g), prior to submission for approval by ADCNP/DCNPC and DEP CHNAVPERs.

6. Procedures

a. Objective. The BUPERS Civilian Awards Program is established to increase productivity by recognizing creativity in the workplace and by rewarding employees and groups

of employees when significant contributions are made. To achieve this objective, the awards program is designed to:

- (1) Recognize outstanding or exceptional personnel performance and special achievements as a single contributor or member of a team;
- (2) Encourage positive personnel participation at all levels to improve business operations; and
- (3) Award cash payments, grant time-off, or incur necessary expenses for both honorary and informal recognition of personnel, either individually or as a member of a group, based on:
 - (a) Superior accomplishment or other personal effort that contributes to the efficiency, economy, or important business operations, or achieves a significant reduction in paperwork;
 - (b) Special acts or service in the public interest in connection with or related to official employment; and
 - (c) Exceptional performance, as reflected in an employee's recommendation.
- (4) Recognize and reward employees as soon after the achievement as possible, and not at the end of the annual performance rating cycle.

b. Nominations

- (1) Award recommendations are to be completed on [NAVPERS 12451/3](#) Civilian Award Recommendation;
- (2) Nomination packages must be endorsed by the head of the organizational unit; and
- (3) Award packages requiring higher-level review and approval must be forwarded to BUPERS-05 for submission to the awards board via ADCNP/DCNPC or DEP CHNAVPERS for final review and approval.

7. Eligibility. Each award may have various eligibility policies per references (a) through (g) and those policies must be reviewed prior to nominating an employee for an award. At the very least, Federal civilian employees assigned to BUPERS commands must be on board at least 90 days to be considered for an award.

8. Award Types

a. Monetary and Time-off Awards

(1) Quality Step Increase (QSI). Because of long-term fiscal costs to the Department of the Navy (DON) and the command, QSIs will be the exception, vice the rule, and must be endorsed by the head of the organizational unit. QSIs are aligned with the performance period and may only be submitted when the call for nominations go out to commands and departments at the end of the performance period.

(a) QSIs are awarded for sustained superior performance.

(b) The most important consideration in determining whether a QSI should be awarded is whether the employee made a significant and lasting contribution to the command or DON mission.

(c) Under no circumstances will a QSI be awarded if an employee has received a promotion during the same fiscal year.

(d) All QSIs will be submitted to the awards board for approval. The awards board will review the employee's performance history for a period of 3 years prior to the approval of any QSI.

(e) DEP CHNAVPERS is the final approving authority for all QSIs.

(2) Incentive and Financial Awards. Awards recognizing employee outstanding achievements and accomplishments. Recognition should be made as soon after the achievement as possible and not at the end of the annual performance rating cycle. BUPERS-05 will send quarterly reminders to assist managers in recognizing employees throughout the year. Recognition is appropriate when an employee performs substantially beyond expectations. Accomplishments may include, but are not limited to exceptional program or project management or individual contribution or teamwork that results in a high-quality product or service to a customer.

(a) On-the-Spot Awards

1. This award is utilized to quickly recognize and provide immediate reinforcement of one-time achievements by employees, resulting in service of an exceptionally high quality or quantity. This award is particularly appropriate for rewarding and recognizing employee efforts that might otherwise go unrecognized.

2. On-the-spot awards range from \$100 to \$750, commensurate with the nature of the service or act being recognized.

3. The head of the organizational unit, CO, or DH may approve on-the-spot awards.

4. Awards will be reviewed by BUPERS-05 to ensure compliance with all applicable regulations. BUPERS-05 may choose to forward any awards to the BUPERS Awards Board for review and final approval.

(b) Special Act or Service Awards

1. This award is utilized to recognize an individual or a group for a non-recurring, specific exemplary contribution within or outside normal job responsibility.

2. The head of the organizational unit, CO, or DH may approve financial awards up to \$3,500 cumulative within a fiscal year. The approver must be, at a minimum, a level higher than the individual who recommends the award.

3. Awards will be reviewed by BUPERS-05 to ensure compliance with all applicable regulations. BUPERS-05 may choose to forward any awards to the BUPERS awards board for review.

4. ADCNP/DCNPC may approve financial awards totaling \$3,501 to \$7,500 cumulative within a fiscal year.

5. DEP CHNAVPER/CNPC may approve financial awards totaling \$7,501 to \$10,000 cumulative within a fiscal year.

(c) Time-Off Awards

1. Time-off awards will not be counted against the awards budget.

2. The head of the organizational unit, CO, or DH must consider daily labor costs, the impact on use-or-lose leave, and the amount of worked overtime. The head of the organizational unit, CO, or DH is authorized to approve time-off awards up to 60 hours cumulative within a fiscal year.

3. ADCNP/DCNPC may approve time-off awards greater than 60 hours and up to 80 hours cumulative within a fiscal year.

4. Time-off awards may only be awarded for 4 hours or more.

b. COQ and COY Awards. The COQ and COY Program is designed to recognize and reward general schedule (GS) civilian employees whose accomplishments, performance, and conduct are above the normal standards of excellence.

(1) Eligibility. For initial nominations, civilian employees must be employed by the nominating command for at least 1 year by the end of the nominating quarter. For subsequent nominations, civilian employees may be nominated or selected only once in any 24-month period as the command's COQ or COY and nominated only once in a 12-month period at the department level. One civilian employee may be nominated in each of the categories below in subparagraph 8b(2).

(2) COQ and COY Organization Structure. Smaller commands and activities may have a different COQ and COY organization structure than larger commands. For example, a selection of only one COQ per quarter and one COY per year may be more appropriate because of the smaller number of civilians on board and smaller award budget. An example for a larger command structure is a selection of three civilians per quarter and year as indicated:

(a) Senior Civilian Employee. All permanent or term civilian employees in grades GS-11 through GS-13.

(b) Mid-Grade Civilian Employee. All permanent or term civilian employees in grades GS-07 through GS-09.

(c) Junior Civilian Employee. All permanent or term civilian employees in grades GS-04 through GS-06.

(3) Awards Board Voting. The awards board members will review and vote quarterly on recommended nominees. The awards board will evaluate the following areas:

(a) Achievement or service that is exceptional when measured against the position requirements of the individual, which should exceed the contributions and service of others with comparable responsibilities.

(b) Accomplishments which show unusual management abilities, innovative thinking, and or outstanding leadership that benefit the command.

(c) Indications of innovative leadership of highly successful programs or projects, which had impact beyond the command.

c. Recognition Awards

(1) Informal recognition awards, such as letters of appreciation, are intended to recognize contributions informally.

(2) A length of service (LOS) certificate award recognizes significant milestones in employees' careers and emphasizes service to the Government. LOS certificates are available in

5-year increments starting at the 10-year LOS. BUPERS issues LOS certificates based on a civilian employee's official service computation date.

(3) Retirement certificates are issued per reference (c), subchapter 451.2.F

d. Honorary Awards. Reference (b) and reference (c), subchapter 451.1, list DON and Department of Defense (DoD) honorary awards in recognition of contributions to the Department's national security, mission, humanitarian, or peacekeeping efforts. Examples include Meritorious, Superior, and Distinguished Civilian Service Awards. These awards will not be used as retirement awards. Reference (e) addresses the approval to process the Navy Civilian Service Commendation and the Navy Civilian Service Achievement Medals. Enclosure (2) provides the guidance for processing the two civilian service medals for performance at the equivalent level of the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal awarded to military personnel for similar achievements.

e. Military Cash Program and Beneficial Suggestion Program. Beneficial suggestions that warrant adoption and cash award up to \$2,000 will be submitted to the BUPERS awards board for approval. Reference (d) contains detailed information on this type of award.

f. FEA Regional Awards Program. The FEA Regional Awards Program instruction will depend on the location of the BUPERS activity or command region. For the Mid-South region, the FEA announcement and solicitation is requested annually from the Federal agencies within the Memphis, TN area.

(1) FEA Employee of the Year Award Program. The FEA Employee of the Year Award Program is an effective means of publicizing the high caliber of devoted and dedicated civilian and military employees in the Federal service to the public and the Federal community.

(2) Recognition. The selected Federal employee(s) of the year, in each category, will receive on-stage recognition and a plaque at an awards luncheon.

(3) Eligibility. Nominees must be either civilian employees of the U.S. Federal Government or uniformed military personnel. Eligibility excludes local heads of installations and agencies, Senior Executive Service civilians, O-6 and above (military), and contractors in all categories.

(a) All nominees must have served a minimum of 12 months (months do not have to be consecutive) in Federal service, at least 6-months of which must have been in the activity or command region, e.g., Memphis, TN metropolitan area.

(b) Award recipients from the previous year are eligible nominees for the following year's nominations.

(c) To ensure all deserving civilian and military employees in the Federal service receive recognition for exemplary job performance and contributions to the Government, public or community, in some categories and according to the number of employees located at the agency or installation, multiple awards may be presented.

9. Civilian Awards Budget. The following policies are applicable to the BUPERS Civilian Awards Program:

a. The United States Office of Management and Budget and United States Office of Personnel Management establish the awards budget guidance for each year. The comptroller of the organization will establish a budget and grant budgetary approval for awards and QSIs.

b. The fiscal year civilian awards budget is based on the total salary levels for all civilians on board 30 September of the previous fiscal year. No dollars will be associated with vacant positions or will be allocated as new civilians report on board throughout the fiscal year. Awards budget amounts may be changed during any year if mandated by higher-level authority.

c. The total yearly cost of a QSI (3 percent of salary), regardless of when awarded, will count against the awards budget.

d. The COQ and COY awards will come from the head of the organizational unit's award budget. Departmental nominees will receive either the award amounts for departmental winners or the award amount for command winners, whichever is applicable. Nominees will not receive both amounts. Award amounts are as follows:

(1) COQ departmental winners – \$500 and 4-hours time-off;

(2) COQ command winners – \$1,000 and 8-hours time-off;

(3) COY command winners – \$1,500 and 8-hours time-off. COY nominees will not receive compensation unless they are the COY command winners.

10. Questions. Questions may be directed to the BUPERS frequently asked questions (FAQ) e-mail box at: MILL_BUPERS-05_FAQ@navy.mil.

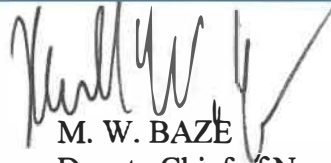
11. Records Management

a. Records created as a result of this instruction, regardless of format or media, must be maintained for the standard subject identification codes 1000 through 13000 series per the records disposition schedules located on the Department of the Navy/Assistant for Administration (DON/AA), Directives and Records Management Division (DRMD) portal page at: <http://portal.secnav.navy.mil/orgs/DUSNM/DONAA/DRM/Records-and-information-Management/Approved%20Record%20Schedules/Forms/AllItems.aspx>.

b. For questions concerning the management of records related to this instruction or the records disposition schedules, please contact the local records manager or the DON/AA DRMD Program office.

12. Review and Effective Date. Per OPNAVINST 5215.17A, BUPERS-05 will review this instruction annually around the anniversary of its issuance date to ensure applicability, currency, and consistency with Federal, DoD, and DON policy and statutory authority using OPNAV 5215/40 Review of Instruction. This instruction will be in effect for 10 years, unless revised or cancelled in the interim, and will be reissued by the 10-year anniversary date if it is still required, unless it meets one of the exceptions in OPNAVINST 5215.17A, paragraph 9. Otherwise, if the instruction is no longer required, it will be processed for cancellation as soon as the cancellation is known following the guidance in OPNAV Manual 5215.1 of May 2016.

13. Form. NAVPERS 12451/3 Civilian Award Recommendation [NAVPERS 12451/3](#) may be accessed at: <https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/References/Forms/NAVPERS/>.



M. W. BAZE
Deputy Chief of Naval Personnel

Releasability and distribution:

This instruction is cleared for public release and is available electronically only via:
<https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/References/Instructions/BUPERS-Instructions/>.

GUIDANCE FOR A FAIR, CREDIBLE, AND TRANSPARENT AWARDS PROCESS

1. Civilian awards are utilized to increase productivity by recognizing and rewarding employees when significant contributions are made. The Defense Performance Management and Appraisal Program (DPMAP) requires continuous rewards and recognition throughout the entire year; therefore, civilian awards are no longer tied to end of year performance. Additionally, it is not expected that employees will be awarded a standard percentage of their salary. This is counter to DPMAP guidance, and employees should be recognized and rewarded based on their achievements, not their pay grades. It is important that the head of the organizational units (e.g., department heads, officers in charge, and commanding officers) closely review all awards coming from their office. This is to ensure a fair, credible, and transparent awards process. Key elements to look for in award nomination submissions include:

a. Consistency in Award Justifications. Ensure write-ups are commensurate with the award amounts (monetary and time-off hours) being recommended. For example, award nominations for \$500 should equate to the same or similar level of achievement. A \$1000 award should equate to a more significant accomplishment or achievement than the \$250 award. A \$250 award does not need half a page or more for justification. Likewise, an award for \$1000 would be best served with a paragraph or two.

b. Consistency in Award Amounts. Ensure award amounts are fair and equitable across your departments. Did one division director award \$500 for an effort and a different division director award \$1,000 for a similar effort? Try to standardize within your organizational unit.

c. Duplication of Awards. Ensure you are not awarding an employee twice for the same achievement.

d. Awards Based on Specific Actions. Ensure award submissions are not written as performance awards, tied specifically to critical elements within the performance plan. Performance within these elements is recognized by the ratings given in the annual appraisal.

2. Additionally, BUPERS-05 recommends setting certain thresholds within your organizational unit. For example:

a. \$250 - The employee performed a specific task beyond his or her normal daily job that may have had impact internally within the division.

b. \$500 - The employee performed a specific task beyond his or her normal daily job that may have had impact internally within the department.

c. \$750 - The employee performed a specific task beyond his or her normal daily job that may have had impact within the command.

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d. \$1000 - The employee performed a special act that may have had significant impact across the command.

e. \$1500 - The employee performed a special act that may have had significant impact within the Navy.

Note: These are examples only. Organizational units may establish their own thresholds and guidance for each award level as long as they are fair, credible, and transparent.

3. BUPERS-05 reviews award submissions for consistent application across the command. A review at the organizational unit level will expedite award processing.

GUIDANCE FOR DON CIVILIAN SERVICE COMMENDATION MEDAL (CSCM) AND
CIVILIAN SERVICE ACHIEVEMENT MEDAL (CSAM)

1. CSCM and CSAM. There are two new DON civilian honorary Awards, the CSCM and the CSAM. BUPERS and all subordinate commands may issue the DON CSCM and the DON CSAM following the procedures and approval authorities identified below:

2. Criteria. The criteria for awarding these newly established honorary awards are as follows:

a. DON CSCM

(1) The DON CSCM is the fourth highest honorary award in the DON. This medal is awarded to DON civilians who distinguish themselves by performing well above what is usually expected of individuals commensurate with their grade or specialty and above the degree of excellence that can be appropriately reflected in the individual's performance evaluations or personnel records.

(2) The DON CSCM may be awarded after a significant achievement (such as an invention or improvement in design, procedure, or organization) or after an extended period (such as a deployment or overseas tour).

(3) Commanders in the rank of O-6 and above and civilians in equivalent positions may approve the DON CSCM.

b. DON CSAM

(1) The DON CSAM is the fifth highest honorary award in the DON. This medal is awarded to DON civilians who, while serving in a capacity within the Navy or Marine Corps, are to be recognized for sustained performance or specific achievement of superlative nature above the degree of excellence that can be appropriately reflected in the individual's performance evaluations or personnel records.

(2) Officers in the rank of O-5 and above and civilians in equivalent positions may approve the DON CSAM.

3. Award Nomination and Issuance

a. Supervisors and managers may nominate subordinate employees.

b. The Navy-blue award folder is recommended for issuing and presenting the citations. Medal and ribbon examples and citation templates are available on the MyNavy HR Portal: https://flankspeed.sharepoint-mil.us/sites/MYNAVYHR_BUPERS/05/SitePages/Awards.aspx.

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c Commands will maintain stock of the medals and ribbons. In lieu of on-hand supply of the physical award, the citation may be presented. In this case, commands are required to track the issuance of the awards and issue medals to the respective recipients once supply is made available. You may order medals and ribbons through [DLA FedMall Web site: https://www.fedmall.mil/](https://www.fedmall.mil/) using stock number 8455-01-679-5448 for the CSCM and stock number 8455-01-679-5446 for the CS.