



SOUTH DAKOTA  DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS POLICY AND PROCEDURE		POLICY NUMBER 200-01	PAGE NUMBER 1 OF 4
		DISTRIBUTION:	Public
		SUBJECT:	Employee Recognition and Awards Program
RELATED STANDARDS:	None.	EFFECTIVE DATE:	October 15, 2025
		SUPERSESSION:	05/01/2025
DESCRIPTION: Personnel	REVIEW MONTH: April	 KELLIE WASKO SECRETARY OF CORRECTIONS	

I. POLICY

It is the policy of the South Dakota Department of Corrections (DOC) to recognize employees who, by their actions and attitudes, exemplify exceptional job performance, organizational commitment, teamwork, and meritorious acts on or off duty.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the Employee Recognition and Awards Program.

III. DEFINITIONS

Line of Duty:

Any action that a Department of Corrections (DOC) employee is obligated or authorized by law, rule, policy, or written condition of employment service to perform, or for which the employee is compensated by the DOC.

IV. PROCEDURES

1. Employee Awards:

A. Employee of the Quarter:

1. To be eligible for a nomination, employee must be a current, full-time employee.
2. Nominations:
 - a. Nominations may be made by any employee.
 - b. Nominations must be made on the official nomination form (attachment #1 - *Employee of the Quarter Nomination Form*).
 - c. Completed forms are submitted to the appropriate employee supervisor.
 - d. Nomination period will be on a fiscal year basis (e.g., 1st quarter July through September, etc.).
3. Selection:
 - a. Each facility/office leadership team will have the opportunity to vote for each nominated employee for the facility's/office's employee of the quarter.
4. Criteria:
 - a. An employee of the quarter is selected from the nominations received, using excellence within scope of their position as the criteria.
5. Description of Award:
 - a. A representative of the facility/office leadership team and the immediate supervisor of the employee to be honored will be present to honor the employee of the quarter.

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- b. A letter from the warden or division director and printed certificate will be presented to the employee of the quarter by the facility/office leadership team.
- c. Where feasible, there will be a designated parking space for the current employee of the quarter.
- d. The employee of the quarter may select a member of the senior management team to job shadow for one (1) day.

B. Division Employee of the Year:

1. Criteria:
 - a. Division employees of the quarter for the current fiscal year will be eligible for this award.
 - b. Divisions may select a facility/office employee of the year without selecting a division employee of the quarter.
2. Selection:
 - a. Each division's nomination for employee of the year will be reviewed and selected by the Senior Management Team.
3. Description of Award:
 - a. A letter from the deputy secretary and printed certificate for the division employee of the year will be presented by the division director or designee.
 - b. Where feasible, there will be a designated parking space for the current division employee of the year.
 - c. The division employee of the year may be invited to attend one of the annual American Correctional Association conferences, contingent upon the continued availability of appropriated funds.
 - d. The division employee of the year may select an executive team member to job shadow for one (1) day.

C. Agency Employee of the Year:

1. Criteria:
 - a. Division employees of the year for the current fiscal year will be eligible for this award.
2. Selection Process:
 - b. The Executive Team will meet in August of each year to discuss and select the agency employee of the year.
 - c. Final selection will be reviewed by the secretary of corrections (SOC).
3. Description of Award:
 - a. A printed certificate provided by the SOC or designee, will be presented in addition to a letter from the SOC to the agency employee of the year.
 - b. The agency employee of the year may select and attend a national professional development training course approved by the deputy secretary of Corrections (DSOC) contingent upon the continued availability of appropriated funds.
 - c. The agency employee of the year may job shadow the DSOC or secretary of Corrections (SOC) for one (1) day.

2. Departmental Recognitions and Awards:

A. Recognitions and Awards administered by the Executive Team:

1. Fallen Officer Memorial.
2. Medal of Valor.
3. Medal of Merit.
4. Value of Life.
5. Team Excellence Award.
6. Correctional Excellence Award.

B. The Executive Team is responsible for administration of the departmental recognitions and awards as follows:

1. Review and evaluate each nomination based on information received.
2. Determine by majority vote the recognition and/or award to be presented (attachment #3 – *Recognition and Award Checklist*).

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3. Forward approved nominations to the SOC for final signature approval.
 4. Forward copies of all approved *Recognition and Awards Nomination* forms (attachment #2) to the employee's personnel file.
- C. Fallen Officer Memorial, Medal of Valor, Medal of Merit, Value of Life, Team Excellence, Correctional Excellence Awards:
1. Departmental recognition and award nominations must be prepared by the nominating person utilizing a Recognition and Awards Nomination form.
 2. All nominations must be signed by the nominating person and forwarded to the supervisor of the employee being nominated. The form will follow the chain of command to the division director of the employee receiving the nomination.
 3. After approval, the supervisor or designee will forward the nomination to the Executive Team.
 4. Nominations must clearly and thoroughly describe the actions that justify the recognition and/or award. When more than one employee is being nominated, the narrative portion of the form for Recognition and Awards Nomination will specify the actions of each individual employee.
 5. All nominations for departmental recognition and awards must be submitted to the Executive Team as soon as possible, not to exceed six (6) months following the event or circumstance.
 6. The Executive Team will review each nomination and all aspects of the event or circumstance within thirty (30) days of receiving the nomination. They will discuss the proposed award and determine which award, if any, is the most appropriate for the event or circumstance.
 7. Nominations must be approved by the SOC prior to the presentation of the award.
- D. All awards, with the exception of the Fallen Officer Memorial, will consist of a printed certificate.
- E. Recognition and Award Descriptions:
1. Fallen Officer Memorial:
 - a. The Fallen Officer Memorial is to honor an employee who was killed in the line of duty.
 - b. Medal of Valor:
 - 1) The Medal of Valor is the department's highest recognition award, earned by employees distinguishing themselves through conspicuous bravery or heroism above and beyond the normal demands of correctional service. The employee displayed great courage in the face of immediate life-threatening peril and with full knowledge of the risk involved. The act should show professional judgment and not jeopardize operations or the lives of others.
 - c. Medal of Merit:
 - 1) Awarded to members who distinguish themselves by exceptional meritorious service through personal initiative, and tenacity such as:
 - a) Participation in a non-routine special assignment or operation requiring creativity, determination, and initiative in the performance of a difficult assignment.
 - b) The action performed had a significant impact and importance to the organization.
 - c) Development of a program or plan which contributes significantly to the department's goals and objectives.
 - d. Value of Life Award:
 - 1) Awarded for the use of life saving tactics in a professional manner to attempt to save the life of another person, while on or off duty.
 - e. Team Excellence Award:
 - 1) This award distinguishes multiple people, who worked together during a non-routine special project or situation, to enhance or promote the mission of the DOC.
 - 2) The event required exceptional teamwork and cooperation and exhibited exceptional non-routine service.
 - f. Correctional Excellence Award:
 - 1) Performance of duties which far exceeded requirements.
 - 2) Providing a substantial idea, policy, or procedure which changed or significantly enhanced operations.
 - 3) Employees that provide exemplary service to ensure successful offender reentry.

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- F. Letter of Recognition: Awarded via the chain of command to an employee, who through alertness and attention to duty, performs their assigned function in a commendable manner.
1. The Letter of Recognition may be used to acknowledge commendable performance of an employee.
 2. The Letter of Recognition should be prepared by the supervisor and/or division director or facility warden.

3. Promotion Recognitions:

- A. The manager or supervisor of the employee will make arrangements for the employee to attend the appropriate announcement.
1. Upon verification of an employee's promotional status, the promoting employee will be presented with a letter/certificate of recognition by the division director or designee of location where they are promoting.
 2. When applicable for uniformed staff, the employee will be pinned with the rank insignia and be presented with the corresponding badge by the division director or designee.

4. Retirement Recognition:

- A. Employees who are retiring from state service will receive recognition for their contribution(s) as determined by the division director or designee and within procurement guidelines.
- B. The employee will advise their supervisor at least sixty (60) days in advance of impending retirement.
- C. The supervisor will initiate requests for retirement letters from the SOC's office for the retiring employee.

V. RESPONSIBILITY

The DSOC is responsible for the annual review and maintenance of this policy.

VI. AUTHORITY

None.

VII. HISTORY

October 2025

May 2025

June 2024 - NEW POLICY

ATTACHMENTS

1. Employee of the Quarter Nomination Form
2. Recognition and Awards Nomination
3. Recognition and Award Checklist
4. DOC Policy Implementation / Adjustments

EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER NOMINATION FORM

I, _____ nominate _____

for Employee of the Quarter.

Please be specific in describing why you nominated this person for Employee of the Quarter:

Signature of Submitter

Date

RECOGNITION AND AWARDS NOMINATION

Name of Candidate:

Candidate ID Number:

Facility or Office:

Work Unit:

Nominator (Print):	Date:
Immediate Supervisor Print Name:	
Immediate Supervisor Approval Signature:	
Warden (if applicable) or Director Print Name:	
Warden (if applicable) or Director Approval Signature:	

NOMINATED FOR:

(Check only one, please)

AWARD	NOMINATION
Department of Corrections Fallen Officer Memorial	
Department of Corrections Medal of Valor	
Department of Corrections Medal of Merit	
Department of Corrections Value of Life	
Department of Corrections Team Excellence Award	
Department of Corrections Correctional Excellence Award	

State why your nominee should be selected for this Departmental award:

Review Date:

Approved: _____

Denied: _____

Comments:

Director:

Date

RECOGNITION AND AWARD CHECKLIST

Medal of Valor:

- “Must distinguish themselves conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of their lives above and beyond the call of duty.”
- “The individual must clearly render him/herself conspicuous above his/her comrades by an act so outstanding that it clearly distinguishes his/her gallantry beyond the call of duty from lesser forms of bravery.”
- “The type of deed which, if not done, would not subject him/herself to any justified criticism.”
- “Must be no margin of doubt or possibility of error in awarding this honor.”

Medal of Merit:

- “Non-routine special assignment or operation requiring creativity, determination, and initiative in the performance of a difficult assignment”, and/or
- “Action had a significant impact and importance to the organization”, and/or
- “Individual developed a program, a process or plan which contributes significantly to DOC goals and objectives.”
- “Individual provided the Department with a Program, process, device, or idea that is adopted by the Department as part of the organizations’ operations.”

Value of Life:

- “Use of life saving tactics in a professional manner to attempt to save the life of another person, while on or off duty.”

Team Excellence:

- “Multiple people who worked together during a non-routine special project or situation, worked together to enhance or promote the mission of DOC.”
- “Event required exceptional teamwork and cooperation and exhibited exceptional non-routine service.”

Correctional Excellence:

- “Performance of duties far exceeded accepted requirements.”
- “Providing a substantial idea, policy or procedure which changed or significantly enhanced operations.”
- “DOC employees that provide exemplary service to ensure successful offender reentry.”