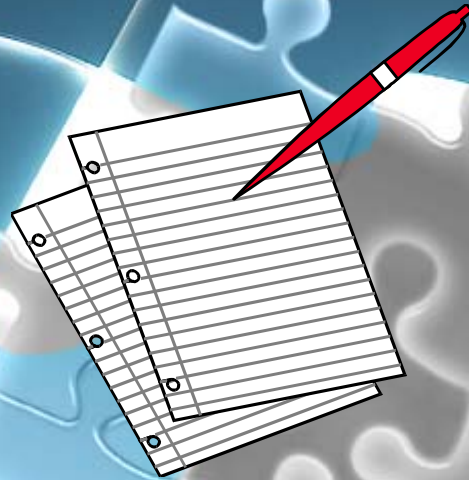


Award Writing Made Easy



**A guide for writing Coast
Guard Award
Recommendations**



AWARDS

Awards, individual or team, are often the best form of "PAY" for **extraordinary effort performed** by an Auxiliarist. They serve as a formal acknowledgement of service by the Coast Guard and the Coast Guard Auxiliary.



AWARDS

It is incumbent upon everyone involved in the Auxiliary Awards Process to ensure that *appropriate effort* is put into the generation of a complete and comprehensive award package that is *anchored in a citation* worthy of the achievement of the nominee.

The responsibility for the initiation of such a package lies squarely upon the award originator.



AWARDS

Information on Coast Guard Auxiliary awards can be found in various documents, such as:

- Auxiliary Manual (COMDTINST M 16790.1F) Chapter 11.
- Chief Director of Auxiliary's Website
http://www.cgaux.info/g_pcx/
- Auxiliary Personnel Services Website
<http://www.auxpdept.org>
- National Commodore's Website
www.cgauxnaco.org/



AWARDS

There are 6 basic types of individual awards that an Auxiliarist can earn:

- Coast Guard Awards for Meritorious Achievement
- Coast Guard Special Awards
- Fifth Coast Guard District (SR) Special Awards
- Auxiliary Annual Service Performance Awards
- Sustained Auxiliary Service Award
- National Recognition Awards



AWARDS

Coast Guard Awards for Meritorious Achievement

- Auxiliary Distinguished Service Medal
- Auxiliary Legion of Merit Medal
- Auxiliary Plaque of Merit
- Auxiliary Meritorious Service Medal
- Medal of Operational Merit
- Auxiliary Commendation Medal
- Auxiliary Achievement Medal
- Auxiliary Commandant Letter of Commendation Award



AWARDS

Coast Guard Special Awards

- Coast Guard Unit Commendation Award
- Coast Guard Meritorious Unit Commendation Ribbon
- Coast Guard Meritorious Team Commendation Ribbon
- Coast Guard Auxiliary Humanitarian Service Award
- Coast Guard Special Operations Service Ribbon
- Coast Guard Recruiting Service Ribbon

(Not all Inclusive)



AWARDS

Auxiliary Annual Service Performance Awards

- Auxiliary Recruiting Service Award
- Auxiliary Vessel Examinations/
- RBS Visitation Program Service Award
- Auxiliary Public Education Service Award
- Auxiliary Operation Service Award
- Coast Guard Auxiliary Excellence "E" Ribbon



AWARDS

National Awards:

- National Photograph Award
- Public Affairs Award
- Membership Growth Award
- NACO's 3 Star Diversity Award
- Vessel Examinations and RBS Visitation Star Award (Individual and Best Flotilla)
- Best Website Award
- Flotilla 50th Anniversary Recognition Award

Coast Guard Awards:

- Diversity Award
- The Charles S. Greanoff Inspirational Leadership Award
- New Auxiliarists of the Year Award
- Association for Rescue at Sea (AFRAS)
- Office of Boating Safety – RBS Award of Excellence



AWARDS

Other National Awards:

- **Boat US Outstanding Flotilla of the Year**
- **Boat US Foundation New Environmental Leadership**
- **Marine Retailers Association of America Outstanding Flotilla**
- **National Boating Federation (PE) Award**



FUNDAMENTAL DO'S IN AWARD PROCESSING

- Do take the time to recognize those who go above and beyond the call of their normal Auxiliary duties.
- Do process award nominations well in advance of deadlines (if imposed).
- **Do expect award packages to be returned if improper or inadequate information.**
- Do check to ensure that recognition efforts are not being duplicated.
- Do expect awards that are not presented at the district conference to be relayed to the appropriate DCP or FC.
- Do expect abbreviated award citations to be read at conference should there be a limit on time.



FUNDAMENTAL DON'TS IN AWARD PROCESSING

- Don't recommend an award for works-in-progress, even phased projects.
- Don't simply say or imply that what a nominee did was "beneficial".
Considerable details and justification must be included to substantiate an award and craft a citation.
- Don't nominate someone for accomplishments in multiple staff positions that were held during different time periods. There should only be one time period for which the nominee is being sighted.
- Don't nominate someone for work they did in their capacity as a member of an organization other than the Auxiliary.
- Don't expect last minute changes to awards or awardees to be made on the day of the award presentations.



Step One

Gather Performance Data On the Member:

- ◆ Look for informal documentation
- ◆ Conduct interviews with:
 1. Chain of command
 2. Peers/subordinates
 3. Other Witnesses



Step Two

Develop bullets by doing each of the following:

- ◆ State the impact on the department/division/unit or Coast Guard.
- ◆ Wordsmith the statement to create one concise yet simple sentence. State what was done and how it was done (stated in the past tense).



Performance Bullets

Performance bullets are the raw material that is needed to produce the statement of actions for which the individual is being cited.

Effective Performance Bullets Always Consists of 3 Parts.

- ◆ What they did
- ◆ How they did it
- ◆ The impact or results of their action (Why it was significant)



Step Three

Decide On The Level Of The Award:

- ◆ The higher the impact, the higher the award
- ◆ Summary of action not required for CG Achievement and CG Commendation Medals. One page summary of action required for Meritorious Service Medal.



Step Four

Draft The Citation:

- ◆ Use standard opening and closing jargon.
- ◆ Use the sentence developed in Step 2 for the body.
- ◆ ALWAYS capitalize the member's LAST NAME and spell out the rate or rank.
- ◆ Spell out abbreviations the first time in the citation.
- ◆ Read the citation out loud to another to check the "flow".



Step Five

Edit the citation (Use the 4-step process):

- ◆ Read it once...

Match the points with the support

- ◆ Read it a second time...

Organize into powerful well-connected thoughts

- ◆ Read it a third time...

Delete dead words

- ◆ Read it a fourth time...

Check grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization



Step Six

Complete CG-1650 In USCG Adobe Forms:

- ◆ Complete blocks 1 through 19.
- ◆ Team awards need to include all team members and social security numbers.
- ◆ [Hyperlink to the CG-1650](#)



Step Seven

Submit the award package to the appropriate Awards Board through the chain of command

Note: Follow local award submission policies



What do I Write About

Pick 3 to 5 items that the member did best or which had the greatest impact on the service or unit. Each bullet should have a number-quantified (if possible) action and a following result. For example, “...100 hours of troubleshooting refrigeration casualty assistance; enhanced quality of life and enabled the cutter to keep operational schedules,” has the action and the result.

So for each item, be specific and ask yourself “What was done?”, “How did they do it?”, and “What was the Result?”

Once you’ve completed this part of the award, the



Hints For Using Statistics

Using numbers to quantify actions is encouraged and carries more oomph! For example, “Seaman Garza volunteered many hours of personal time to invent a beacon which save the Coast Guard a lot of money...” Doesn’t tell the story as well as, “SEAMAN Garza invested 100 hours of personal time to invent the Aids to Navigation Beacon which saved the Coast Guard \$175,000.00.”

Remember not to criticize an individual’s predecessor. Also focus on items that are high profile or extend beyond a member’s command.



Jargon And Content

The citation is an account “...which will be cherished by the Awardee and a source of pride to their families”.

The Rewards and Recognition Handbook says “...we are telling a story to everyone about what the person receiving the award has done.



Jargon And Content (cont)

For the citation, refer to the proper award manual for the opening and closing jargon for each award and copy that part exactly. The information is found in:

- ◆ COMDTINST M1650.25 for military personnel
- ◆ COMDTINST M12451.1 for civilian personnel
- ◆ COMDTINST M16790.1 for Auxiliarist personnel
- ◆ The Rewards and Recognition Handbook
(COMDTINST P1650.27 has heaps of ideas too.

The statement is written in a single paragraph and sandwiched between the standard opening and closing sentences.



Wording and the “Guts”

A citation is supposed to be formalized, concise and straightforward. Formalized means that it is written in the third person (“...he created...”), often using the rank and surname (“... Chief Petty Officer Jones created...”)

Here are recommendations for choosing some words and phrases:

After the standard opening, each bullet should start with an action word like these:

- ◆ Displaying
- ◆ Showing
- ◆ Through
- ◆ Exhibiting
- ◆ Using
- ◆ Demonstrating
- ◆ Making

Wording and the “Guts” (cont)



The next words should be an adjective-noun combination something like these:

- ◆ Superior leadership, he...
- ◆ Exceptional competence and professionalism, she...
- ◆ Expert technical skills, he...
- ◆ Highest degree of proficiency, she...
- ◆ Accomplished organizational abilities, she...
- ◆ Finely honed
- ◆ Keen insight




Wording and the “Guts” (cont)

Adverbs work well for the next word(s) such

as:

- ◆ Quickly
- ◆ Capably
- ◆ Professionally
- ◆ Skillfully
- ◆ Proficiently
- ◆ Adeptly
- ◆ Effectively
- ◆ Efficiently



Wording and the “Guts” **(cont)**

Steer away from using specific language or acronyms or name of equipment that are not commonly used in the English language. A food rule is to use simple, everyday words that convey powerful thoughts.

Also avoid being gushy or using “puffed up” words that seem phony or pompous.



Wording and the “Guts” (cont)

Now, simply mix and match the words and phrases to ensure each bullet is a flowing sentence or two. Start with the accomplishment you consider to be the most significant. The body of the citation is simply 3 to 5 bullets turned into powerful, concise sentences, one after another.

Voila!!! You’ve completed the citation.

Well, Almost!



Wording and the “Guts” **(cont)**

Before you turn it in, take the citation and read it “OUTLOUD”, then read it again. Then ask someone else to read what you have written. Make all corrections and changes and read it one last time.

This is the most effective way to check grammar and see if what you have written really is concise, flowing, and powerful.



Formats

There are two type of formats for an award citation, and they are:

- ◆ Citation format
- ◆ Letter format



Citation Format

Most Citations are printed sideways (landscape), across standard 8 1/2 X 11 paper. The margins are 1 inch for the top and sides and 2.3 inches on the bottom. (this leave room for the gold seal) We recommend using 12 point **Times Roman** style font. Citations consist of 5 lines of heading and the body consisting of the standard opening sentence, action/impact items, and the standard closing sentence (all discussed earlier). **We recommend that the body be between 15 and 19 lines long, justified.** Be a relentless editor and choose your words carefully.

NOTE: Landscape Citations for AAM, ACM, AMSM, ALOM, ADSM and Portrait Citations for ACLOC and MTC. All award text must be full-justified.



Heading

The heading should look like this:

**CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF
THE (type of medal goes here)
TO
(spelled out rank and full name goes here)
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

**The heading is always centered on the page
and capitalized**



Letter Format

The Commandant's Letter of Commendation (ACLOC) is a typical LETTER FORMAT award. It is printed on the Commandant's letter stationary. They are always from the "Commandant" to the individual. The subject is "LETTER OF COMMENDATION," and they always have 3 paragraphs.



Letter Format (cont)

All ACLOCs are printed on 8-1/2 X 11 Stationary lengthwise (portrait style). In keeping with the Correspondence Manual, they are printed using 12 point Courier font. The Meritorious Team Award is also done in letter format with different standard phrases. Be sure to refer to the Medals and Awards Manual for proper wording and Phrasing.

Both the letter of Commendation and Meritorious Team Award are closed with the phrase:

“For the Commandant”



AWARDS

Filling out the 1650 Award Recommendation Form (re: Auxiliary Website www.cgaux.org, Member Section, Forms sub-section.



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by

**The Leadership and Quality
Institute**