

**The American Legion
DEPARTMENT OF VIRGINIA
1708 Commonwealth Ave.
Richmond, VA. 23230**

Subject: The American Legion Department of Virginia Firefighter of the Year Award

To: Department Internal Affairs Committee

1. This memorandum sets forth the proposed procedures and criteria to be used in the Department of Virginia for the submission of candidates for subject award.

2. Scope: In recent years it has become abundantly evident that first responders of all descriptions play a vital role in the protection of the lives and property of all Virginians. The Preamble to the Constitution of the American Legion includes as one of its objectives... "to maintain Law and Order". As concerned citizens and veterans, Legionnaires have always fostered a strong sense of law and order and upheld the protection of American citizens and the American way of life. Firefighters and EMT's are at the forefront of those who commit to maintaining the "order" part of that statement by consistently putting their lives on the line in response to the various emergency situations that occur on a daily basis within and surrounding their jurisdictions.

3. Purpose: The purpose of this memorandum of instruction is to specify the guidelines, eligibility criteria and application requirements to be used by the Department of Virginia in submitting a candidate for this most prestigious award. Our goal is to select a well-rounded Firefighter/EMT who has exceeded, above and beyond, the duty requirements expected of his/her position and has demonstrated a distinct pattern of community service coupled with professional achievement. Episodes of heroism, should, of course, also be included. A secondary, however, major purpose of this award is to encourage the further development of District and Post Law and Order Committees in all Districts and Posts in recognition of firefighters and EMT's throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia.

4. Award Designation: This award shall be known as: "The American Legion Department of Virginia Firefighter/EMT of the Year Award" and it will be presented annually at the Department Convention. All Posts are encouraged to participate in this most prestigious program. The "Firefighter of the Year" will receive an appropriate Plaque. Travel and lodging to the Department Convention is on a case by case basis.

5. Guidelines for Posts:

a. All Posts are urged to select a Firefighter to be considered for the Department of Virginia award. Posts should submit their nominee for this award to "Chairman Law and Order Committee, The American Legion, Department of Virginia, 1708 Commonwealth Ave, Richmond, Va. 23230 not later than February 15 of each year.

b. The inclusive dates for this award cover the calendar year January 1 Through December 31 and until the following February 15 deadline for submission to the Department.

- c. Posts may submit only one nominee per year. Once a nominee has been entered in the award competition he/she will not be allowed to be submitted for another year.
- d. The resume and application for the nominee from each Post must conform to the criteria as contained herein. The eligibility and criteria stated in this memo will be used to select the Department Firefighter of the Year.

6. Eligibility Criteria:

To be eligible for consideration Post nominees must meet the following criteria:

- a. Be a citizen of the United States, male or female.
- b. Be a certified, living, active full-time, paid or volunteer firefighter. EMT's are eligible only if they are also certified firefighters.
- c. Consideration for a posthumous award will be accepted only if the nominee's death has occurred after he/she was selected as the Department winner.
- d. Reside and be assigned or attached for duty in the Commonwealth of Virginia.
- e. Nominees are not required to be veterans or members of The American Legion.
- f. Nominees selected for this award must be available to receive this award at the Department Convention.
- g. Military firefighters are eligible for participation in this award provided they are state firefighter certified.

7. Application Packets: Nominee packets should include: (1) a completed application form, (2) a 5"x7" photograph of the nominee, and (3) a maximum of 18 one-sided pages 8 1/2"x11" bond paper of service documentation. The first six or seven pages should contain the individual's service narrative. The additional pages may include supporting citations and other documentation to include press articles. Two copies of the application packet need to be submitted.

The following documentation should be included:

- a. Application form** - Complete the attached application form and use it as the cover page of the application. This cover page shall not count as part of the maximum 18 pages of service documentation.
- b. Service narrative and supporting documentation.** The goal of the Department Law and Order Committee is to select a well-rounded firefighter who has exceeded above and beyond the duty requirements of his/her position, who exemplifies the virtues of professionalism and dedication, has demonstrated a distinct pattern of community service to his/her community and has also proven his/her dedication to societal security and protection. The nominee must be recommended by his/her Commanding Officer or Supervisor for this award. Specific acts of community service, heroism and meritorious performance recognized by his/her fire department should be included and documented.
- c. Community Service:** Outstanding service to the Community, State or Nation by the firefighter in both on-duty and off-duty should be explained for the past year and may include previous years. Cite, for example, awards and/or supporting letters from Town, City, County, State or National officials. Letters from American Legion Officials at the National, Department or Post level as well as from citizens attesting to and commending the firefighter for his/her community service should also be explained.
- d. Citations** for heroism and meritorious performance of duty should be explained for the past year and may include previous years. Include citations and any supporting letters from the officer's chain of command as well as other documentation from government officials, American Legion officials, citizens and civic groups as further evidence of heroism and meritorious performance of duty by the firefighter.
- e. Include** a copy of your nominee's State or Federal certification as a firefighter as well as pertinent training and education certificates as appropriate.

8. Selection of the Firefighter of the Year:

- a. As soon as practical after the February 15th deadline, the Department staff will provide a copy of each application packet to the Chairman of the Law and Order Committee as well as a copy to each of the three committee advisors.
- b. The three advisors will review the packets, rank the nominees and provide a written report with recommendations to the Committee Chairman. They will also return the packets to the Department staff.
- c. The Law and Order Committee Chairman will notify all committee members that they will be reviewing and selecting a candidate at the Department Spring Conference. At the conference, committee members will review the packets, discuss the candidates, read the reports and recommendations of the committee advisors and then vote to select a winner.
- d. At the Department Spring Conference during the Department Executive Committee meeting the Law and Order Chairman will present the recommended candidate for approval.
- e. As soon as practical after the Spring Conference the Post whose nominee is the winner will be notified. It is the responsibility of the Post submitting the winner to ensure he/she is present at the Department Convention to receive the award.
- f. The Department no later than January 15th of the following year will prepare a new application sheet with the signature of the Department Commander and forward the packet to American Legion National Headquarters 1608 K St. NW, Washington D.C. 20006. Attn: National Security-Foreign Relations Division. It is hoped that these procedures will make preparation and submission of nominee applications an easier process. Please remember that failure to follow these procedures and all eligibility criteria will be cause for rejection of your nominee.

Let's get behind this program and make it one of the Department of Virginia's premier programs.

For God and Country,

Bill Feasenmyer
Chairman, Law and Order Committee

**The American Legion
Department of Virginia
Firefighter/EMT of the Year**

Application Form

Date: _____

Full Name: _____

Home Address _____

City/County _____ Zip _____ Phone (____) _____

Age _____ Marital Status _____ Spouses Name _____

Length of Service as Firefighter/EMT _____

Agency Name _____

Agency Director _____ Title _____

Nominee's Supervisor _____ Title _____

Agency Address _____

City/Town/County _____ Zip _____ Phone (____) _____

Post Submitting Nomination _____

Post Law and Order Chairman _____

Address _____

City/Town/County _____ Zip _____ Phone (____) _____

Post Commander _____
(Signature)

Post Adjutant _____
(Signature)