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

MEMORANDUM

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

To: Department Law and Order Committee Members
District Commanders
District Law and Order Chairpersons
Post Commanders
Post Law and Order Chairpersons

1. Overview: This memorandum sets forth procedures and criteria to be used in the Department of Virginia for submission of nominees for the subject award.
2. Background: 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 foster a strong sense of law and order and advocate for the protection of American citizens and the American way of life. In the course of their routine daily duties, Firefighters and EMTs selflessly serve to protect the lives and property of citizens and as such contribute significantly to good order in our communities.
3. Purpose: This memorandum specifies the guidelines, eligibility criteria and application requirements to be used by the Department of Virginia in submitting a nominee for this prestigious award. Our goal is to select and recognize a well-rounded Firefighter/EMT who has exceeded, above and beyond, the duty requirements expected of their position and has demonstrated a distinctive pattern of community service coupled with professional achievement. Any episodes of heroism should of course be included. A secondary purpose of this Department-level award program is to encourage District-level and Post-level Law and Order committees to recognize Firefighters and EMTs 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 an award plaque will be presented annually at the Department Convention. Only on a case-by-case basis will the Department subsidize travel and lodging to the Department Convention.
5. Guidelines for Posts:
   a. All Posts are urged to select a Firefighter to be considered for this prestigious award. Posts should submit, not later than February 15th of each year, their nomination for this award to:

      Chairman, Law and Order Committee
      The American Legion
      Department of Virginia
      1708 Commonwealth Ave
      Richmond, VA 23230

b. The inclusive dates for this award cover the calendar year (January 1st through December 31st) and until the following February 15th 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 they will not be allowed to be submitted for any succeeding year.
d. The nominee's application packet submitted by a Post must conform to the criteria as contained herein. The eligibility and criteria stated in this memorandum will be used to select the Department Firefighter (or Firefighter/EMT) of the Year.

6. Nominee Eligibility Criteria:
   a. Be a citizen of the United States, male or female.
   b. Be a certified, living, active full-time, paid or volunteer firefighter. EMTs 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. Nomination Application Packet:
   a. Completed application form.
   b. 5" x 7" photograph of nominee.
   c. Maximum of 18 one-sided pages (8.5" x 11" bond paper) of service documentation.
   d. The first six or seven pages should contain the nominee's service narrative; and additional pages may include supporting citations and other documentation to include press articles.
   e. Two copies of the nomination application packet need to be submitted to the Department.
   f. Nomination application packet amplifying instructions:
      - Application form: Complete the attached application form and use it as the cover page for the application. This cover page shall not count as part of the maximum 18 pages of service documentation.
      - 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 distinctive pattern of community service to his/her community and has 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.
      - Community Service: Outstanding service to the Community, State and/or Nation by the firefighter while on-duty and/or off-duty should be described for the past year and may include previous years. Examples include descriptions of 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 included.

- Citations: 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 firefighter'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.
- Firefighter Certification: Include a copy of the nominee's State 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 four copies of each nomination application packet to the Law and Order Committee Chairman who will appoint/select a three-member committee, and provide them copies for their review.
   b. The three-member committee will review the nomination application packets, rank them, and provide a written report with recommendations to the Law and Order Committee Chairman. They will also ensure the nomination application packets are returned to Department staff.
   c. The Law and Order Committee Chairman will notify all Law and Order 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, read the reports and recommendations of the three-member committee, deliberate, and then vote for a selectee.
   d. At the Department Spring Conference during the Department Executive Committee meeting, the Law and Order Committee Chairman will present the selectee for Department approval.
   e. As soon as practical after the Spring Conference the Post whose nominee is the approved selectee 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.
9. Conclusion: It is hoped that these procedures will make preparation and submission of nominee applications an efficient process. Please remember that failure to follow these procedures and all eligibility criteria will be cause for rejection of a nominee. Let's get behind this program and make it one of the Department of Virginia's premier programs!

Mike Mixon
Chairman
Department Law and Order Committee

The American Legion
Department of Virginia
Firefighter/EMT of the Year
Application Form

Date: _____

Name: _____ Sex: _____

Home Address: _____

City/County: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Age: _____ Marital Status: _____ Spouse's Name: _____

Length of Service as Firefighter: _____

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 name and signature: _____

Post Adjutant name and signature: _____