



First Responders Appreciation 2025

The First Responders Appreciation Awards recognize the courageous actions of our first responders in the Fredericksburg region. The Police, Fire, Medical, Public Safety, Sheriff and Troopers participating may nominate members of their department for awards. A Selection committee will then review all of the nominations before choosing this year's honorees.

Heroism Awards

Gold Award – Exceptional Bravery in the Face of Extreme Danger

Awarded to a public safety official who knowingly places their life in imminent danger during an official act to save others. This may include acts performed during active rescue operations, dangerous confrontations, or while rendering life-saving aid in high-risk situations. The nominee may have suffered serious injury or risked death. Examples include rescuing individuals from a burning structure, hazardous environment, or dangerous confrontation.

Silver Award – Heroism in High-Risk Situations

Awarded for courageous action where a public safety official exposes themselves to great personal risk during the course of duty. Situations may include water rescues without full equipment, active threats without protective gear, or resolving high-risk incidents with exceptional courage. While the officer's life was seriously threatened, no life-threatening injury occurred.

Bronze Award – Courage and Judgment in Dangerous Situations

Awarded when a public safety official shows extraordinary judgment or ingenuity during an emergency that involved some level of personal risk. Safety protocols were in place, but the act required quick thinking and bravery, such as a water rescue using flotation gear or resolving a volatile situation with skillful de-escalation.

Unit Award – Team Valor in Critical Operations

Recognizes a public safety unit that works together with outstanding coordination and courage to manage an emergency. The team collectively demonstrates bravery, innovation, or exceptional performance in dangerous or life-threatening circumstances. Examples include complex extractions, large-scale rescues, or successful de-escalation efforts. Note: This award is presented as a unit citation, not individual recognition.

Merit Award – Excellence Beyond Expectation in Emergency Response

Awarded for demonstrating exceptional performance, judgment, or initiative beyond the routine call of duty. This may include life-saving actions like CPR, application of a tourniquet, or rescue efforts under unusual or unforeseen circumstances that posed increased risk to the responder.

Investigative Excellence

Excellence in Criminal Investigation Award

Recognizes outstanding integrity, skill, and persistence in investigative work. May include solving a cold case, overseeing a particularly complex investigation, or achieving successful resolution of a major or unusual case.

Collaborative Investigation Award

Presented to an individual or group who demonstrated exemplary teamwork across departments or agencies to solve high-level, complex cases. This may include multi-jurisdictional drug, gang, or fire investigations requiring extensive forensic work or long-term undercover operations.

Merit in Investigative Work

Honors sustained contributions in crime scene processing, evidence handling, or other investigative tasks that directly contributed to the closure of a major case or series of cases. This is often awarded for excellence across multiple investigations over time.

Operational Innovation

“The Business of First Responding” Award

Recognizes a department or individual responsible for developing or implementing a program, system, or initiative that significantly improves operations, service delivery, or community impact. Examples include technological upgrades, new training protocols, or public safety initiatives.

Community Recognition

Citizen Valor Award

Presented to a civilian who voluntarily puts themselves at risk to assist a public safety official or fellow citizen during a criminal act or life-threatening situation. This may include intervening in an emergency, preventing further harm, or directly saving a life through courageous and selfless action.

Firefighter/EMS Distinctions

Lifesaving Award

Recognizes a firefighter or EMS professional who has directly saved a life through emergency medical care, rescue operations, or life-saving intervention, including CPR or advanced trauma support.

Unit Citation – Team Excellence in Fire/EMS

Awarded to a team of firefighters or EMS professionals for a coordinated act of bravery or exceptional service. This includes team efforts in high-risk fire responses, mass casualty incidents, or complex rescues demonstrating unity, professionalism, and skill.