

# Reclamation Manual

## Directives and Standards

<b>Subject:</b>	Honor Awards
<b>Purpose:</b>	Establishes the Bureau of Reclamation's requirements, criteria, and processes for Department of the Interior honor awards and citations. The benefit of this Directive and Standard (D&S) is to ensure consistent application of honor and other non-monetary achievement awards.
<b>Authority:</b>	5 U.S.C. 45, <i>Incentive Awards</i> , 5 CFR 451, <i>Awards</i> , and Department of the Interior, Departmental Manual (DM), 370 DM 451.3, <i>Honor Awards</i> .
<b>Approving Official:</b>	Deputy Commissioner, Policy, Administration and Budget
<b>Contact:</b>	Human Resources (HR) Division, HR Policy Office, (84-12100)

1. **Introduction.** Awarding Departmental honor and other achievement awards provides non-monetary recognition to employees of the Department. Honor and achievement awards convey the highest formal acknowledgment that the Department and Bureau can grant for career accomplishments, exceptional support of the Department or Reclamation's missions, and heroism. This D&S establishes the requirements and criteria that must be met on the Department's *Recommendation and Approval of Awards* form, DI-451, before submitting an honor award and/or citation. Appendices A, B, C, and D of this D&S provide a template DI-451 for honor awards, outline the processes, provide instructions on the formatting of honor awards, and provide information for completing the signature blocks on the DI-451.
2. **Applicability.** This D&S applies to individuals who submit honor and other non-monetary award nominations, and to directors, managers, and supervisors who sanction the nominations and awards to be sent to the Secretary, Assistant Secretary—Water and Science, or Commissioner for approval and/or concurrence.
3. **Requirements and Responsibilities.**
  - A. **Human Capital Officer, HR Division.**
    - (1) The Human Capital Officer must review the content of all awards/citations other than those in Paragraph 3.G., prior to final approval of honor award nominations; and
    - (2) surname awards entries in the Department's Data Tracking System (DTS) and sign as the reviewing official on the DI-451 before forwarding to the Commissioner for final approval.
  - B. **Regional Directors and Denver Directorates.**
    - (1) Directors must promote and support the Department and Bureau's honor and other non-monetary awards programs;

# Reclamation Manual

## Directives and Standards

---

- (2) ensure awards and citations meet Departmental and Reclamation honor award regulations, guidelines, and criteria;
- (3) validate the eligibility of the nominee receiving an award, (i.e., manager is not aware of any potential derogatory information), which must be noted on the DI-451;
- (4) determine if there is justification to disapprove an award in situations where an employee's record may contain derogatory information. The director will consider the time frame, seriousness, relationship to award, impact of the incident, and other relevant factors;
- (5) concur and agree to all information in the award by signing as the approving individual on the DI-451; and
- (6) ensure only one nomination per award or award category, where applicable, is submitted to the Reclamation HR Awards Coordinator.

### C. Managers and Supervisors.

- (1) Managers and/or supervisors must nominate deserving employees for appropriate level honor awards in a timely fashion for special project completion or deserving contributions and accomplishments (see criteria in Paragraphs 5.A. through C.);
- (2) validate the nominee is eligible to receive an honor award (i.e., manager or supervisor is not aware of any potential derogatory information);
- (3) ensure the honor award/citation contains the descriptive information necessary to endorse the nomination (see criteria in Paragraphs 5.A. through C.); and
- (4) concur and agree to all information in the honor award by signing as the supervisor on the DI-451.

### D. Reclamation's HR Awards Coordinator.

- (1) The Reclamation HR Awards Coordinator must ensure the servicing HR office reviews the nominee's electronic Official Personnel Folder (eOPF) for any derogatory information, certify this review on the DI-451 by stating "no finding," and include the digital signature of the reviewer;
- (2) initiate review of employee records with Reclamation's Civil Rights Division (CRD), the Department's Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Civil Rights (ODICR), and the Office of Inspector General, and complete and certify these reviews on the DI-451 prior to submitting the award/citation to the Commissioner's Office;

# Reclamation Manual

## Directives and Standards

---

- (3) ensure the award/citation meets Departmental and Reclamation honor award regulations, guidelines, and criteria; review the citation for content, grammar, and proper formatting (see paragraphs 5.A. through C. and 6.A. and B.); and, if criteria are not met, return to the submitting servicing HR office for revision;
- (4) verify that the award/citation is approved by the nominator, nominees' manager and/or supervisor, and the appropriate director; and
- (5) enter and route all honor awards in DTS to the HR Policy Office Manager and the Human Capital Officer for review, surnaming, and signature as applicable, after paragraphs 3.B.(1) through (6) have been completed.

### **E. Reclamation's CRD Manager.**

- (1) The CRD Manager must ensure nominees are in good standing with the Civil Rights Office and certify the DI-451 prior to submitting the award/citation to the Commissioner;
- (2) receive the ODICR employee records vetting request for derogatory information;
- (3) determine if a finding precludes a nominee from an award, as necessary;
- (4) create a memorandum for record informing Reclamation's HR Awards Coordinator that no derogatory information exists that would preclude the employee from award eligibility;
- (5) if applicable, review and revise the briefing paper from the servicing Civil Rights (CR)/Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) office and forward to the Commissioner as described in Paragraphs 3.G.(3-4) of this D&S; and
- (6) document Commissioner's decision on DI-451, as described in Paragraph 3.G.(4).

### **F. Servicing HR Office Awards Coordinators.**

- (1) The servicing HR Office awards coordinators must initiate a review of the nominee's eOPF for derogatory information, certify on the DI-451 by stating "no finding," and include the digital signature of the reviewer;
- (2) initiate review of employee records with the servicing CR/EEO office to ensure no derogatory information exists;
- (3) ensure the award/citation meets Departmental and Reclamation award regulations and criteria; review the award/citation, with servicing HR officer oversight, for substantive content, correct grammar, and format (see Paragraphs 5.A. through C. and 6.A. and B.); and, if the criteria are not met, return to the author for revision;

# Reclamation Manual

## Directives and Standards

---

- (4) verify that the award/citation is approved by the nominator, nominees' manager and/or supervisor, and the appropriate director; and
- (5) route all honor awards to Reclamation's HR Awards Coordinator.

### G. Servicing CR/EEO Officers and Specialists.

- (1) The servicing CR/EEO officers and/or specialists must review EEO complaint and administrative inquiry records under their control and/or confer with the appropriate EEO office(s), ensuring review of all relevant records for the past 5 years, to determine whether:
  - (a) the nominee has been the named individual responsible for discrimination in a complaint in which the Department, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), or Federal district court has issued a Finding of Discrimination (proceed to Paragraph 3.G.(2)(b));
  - (b) the nominee has not been the named individual responsible for discrimination in a complaint (proceed to Paragraph 3.G.(2)(a)); or
  - (c) the nominee has been or currently is the named individual responsible for an ongoing or series of ongoing discrimination complaint(s) or administrative inquiry(ies) (proceed to Paragraph 3.G.(3)).
- (2) recommend approval or disapproval of honor award nominations, after reviewing records for the past 5 years as described in paragraph 3.G.(1), by:
  - (a) approving the nomination through written response to the servicing HR awards coordinator, if review of EEO records demonstrates the nominee has not been the named individual responsible for discrimination in any EEO complaint(s) or administrative inquiry(ies); or
  - (b) disapproving the nomination through written response to the servicing HR awards coordinator if review of EEO records demonstrates the nominee has been the named individual responsible for discrimination in a complaint or complaints in which the Department, the EEOC, or a federal district court has issued a Finding of Discrimination within the past 5 years.
- (3) coordinate with Reclamation's CRD Manager to determine if findings warrant additional action and if additional action is required, the servicing CR/EEO office develops a briefing paper for the approving official detailing relevant information to determine the appropriateness of the nomination, which must include the following:
  - (a) date(s) of complaint/inquiry;

# Reclamation Manual

## Directives and Standards

---

- (b) specific complaint of discrimination or issue investigated;
  - (c) status of the complaint/inquiry, if applicable;
  - (d) resolution of the complaint/inquiry, if applicable; and
  - (e) statement of concurrence or non-concurrence of the nomination, which is not solely based on the mere existence of a series of complaints, but rather on an in-depth analysis of the nature of the issues raised, the nominee's actions in relation to sound management practices, and the contents of the Departmental or EEOC decisions or communications regarding the complaints.
- (4) provide the briefing paper as outlined in Paragraph 3.G.(3), to the director of the organization the nominee resides in.
- (a) If the director agrees with the statement of non-concurrence, the director will send an email to Reclamation's HR Awards Coordinator and the servicing CR/EEO officer with their agreement of non-concurrence.
  - (b) If the director decides to forward the nomination despite a statement of non-concurrence by the servicing CR/EEO specialist or officer, the servicing CR/EEO specialist or officer will forward the briefing paper to Reclamation's CRD manager, who will review and revise the paper as appropriate and forward to the Commissioner as the final approving official. Reclamation's CRD manager will document the Commissioner's decision on the DI-451.

### H. Employees.

- (1) Employees may initiate honor award nominations by completing the DI-451 (see Appendix A), after which, the DI-451 must go through the proper review and approval process (i.e., submitted through supervisory channels to the appropriate director and servicing HR and CR/EEO offices for review) (see Appendix B); and
- (2) submit a citation, if applicable, through supervisory channels upon confirmation from the servicing HR awards coordinator that the DI-451 has been approved.

### 4. Award Descriptions.

- A. **Citizen's Award for Bravery.** A heroic act honor award for private citizens who risk their lives to save the life of a Departmental employee serving in the line of duty or the life of any person, who is on property owned by or entrusted to the Department. This award requires a DI-451 and approval from the Secretary of the Interior.

# Reclamation Manual

## Directives and Standards

---

- B. **Citizen's Award for Exceptional Service.** Reclamation -specific award for private citizens or organizational partners, including volunteers. This award requires a DI-451 and approval from the Commissioner.
- C. **Commissioner's Safety Award.** Recognizes superior achievements and contributions impacting field, area, regional, and Reclamation's safety programs and culture. Awards consist of individual, team/group, organization, and Safety Professional/Collateral Duty Safety Representative. This award requires a DI-451 and approval from the Commissioner.
- D. **Director's Award of Excellence.** This is an entry-level award for all employees recognizing sustained excellence in leadership and specific directorate mission accomplishments. The respective director writes and approves a formal citation and does not require a DI-451.
- E. **Distinguished Service Award (DSA).** The highest-level honor award granted to career employees of the Department. Recipients must have demonstrated significant, long-term contributions to the Department's programs and missions. This award requires a DI-451 and is approved by the Secretary of the Interior. See Appendix B for processing requirements.
- F. **Exemplary Act Award.** A heroic act honor award for Department employees or private citizens who attempt to save the life of a Department employee serving in the line of duty or the life of any other person who is on property owned by or entrusted to the Department, when risk to their own lives is not an issue. This award requires a DI-451 and approval from the Commissioner.
- G. **John W. Keys III Award.** Established to recognize employees and nongovernmental customers and stakeholders that make exceptional contributions in building partnerships and strengthening relationships, this award recognizes outstanding business practices, communication, collaboration, and partnering achievements. This award requires a DI-451 and approval from the Commissioner.
- H. **Meritorious Service Award (MSA).** The second highest honor award presented to employees who have made exceptional continuing contributions to Department or Reclamation mission accomplishments. This award requires a DI-451 and approval from the Assistant Secretary—Water and Science and. See Appendix B for processing requirements.
- I. **Outside Awards.** Outside awards include award programs sponsored by external organizations. These awards require a DI-451 and approval from the Assistant Secretary—Water and Science.
- J. **Project Manager of the Year.** Established to recognize employees who make exceptional contributions in project management, the Project Manager of the Year

# Reclamation Manual

## Directives and Standards

---

Award recognizes project managers who clearly demonstrate exemplary performance in implementing and applying project management best practices in accordance with Reclamation's Project Management Framework. This award requires a DI-451 and approval from the Commissioner.

- K. **Reclamation Length of Service Award.** An award for employees with more than 10-years of federal service. Employees receive a Length of Service certificate and a lapel pin at each 10-year milestone. Regional and Denver Directors sign the 10- and 20-year certificates and the Commissioner signs certificates for 30-years and higher. A DI-451 is not required for this award.
  - L. **Reclamation Service Award.** An entry-level award for employees with more than 5 years of service with Reclamation. A formal letter is written to officially commend an employee for on-going contributions or accomplishments within his/her job responsibilities. The letters of award require a DI-451 for routing through the approval process and approval from the Commissioner.
  - M. **Retirement Recognition Award.** An award for retiring employees with 5 or more years of federal service. Eligible retirees receive a certificate of retirement to officially acknowledge and recognize their dedication, professionalism, and years of service. The Commissioner approves the certificate, a DI-451 is not required.
  - N. **Superior Service Award (SSA).** An entry-level honor award for career employees of the Department who have made significant achievements or performed significant acts or services that materially aid the mission of the Department. This award requires a DI-451 and is approved by the Commissioner. See Appendix B for processing requirements.
  - O. **Unit Award for Excellence of Service.** For exceptional contribution(s) of employee groups, units, or teams. This award requires a DI-451 and approval from the Commissioner.
  - P. **Valor Award.** The highest heroic act honor award granted to employees or private citizens for heroic acts or unusual bravery. This award requires a DI-451 and approval from the Secretary.
5. **Content Criteria for Nominations.** Employees at all grade levels are eligible to be nominated for an honor award in accordance with criteria established for each category of award. Employees may receive only one MSA and only one DSA during their career.
- A. **Highest Level Award.** The DSA recognizes employees for outstanding contribution to science, outstanding skill or ability in the performance of duty, an eminent career in the Department, an outstanding record in administration, an outstanding contribution to equal opportunity in Government, an outstanding contribution to energy conservation, or any other exceptional contribution to the public service. The nominees' contributions

# Reclamation Manual

## Directives and Standards

---

exemplify the highest standards and dedication to public service and significantly benefit the Department.

- B. **Mid-Level Awards.** The MSA recognizes continuous and distinctive achievements, within or beyond an individual's area of responsibility and significantly advances the Department's mission in the following areas:
- (1) leadership, ability, and devotion to duty displayed over a considerable period, reflecting noteworthy credit on Reclamation and/or the Department, and resulting in the advancement of program goals;
  - (2) extraordinary service or accomplishment demonstrating exceptional ingenuity and ability while contributing to improved efficiency of operations in program areas within Reclamation and/or the Department;
  - (3) performance of assigned duties in an outstanding manner and with identifiable benefits clearly deserving of one of the highest forms of recognition; or
  - (4) development and improvement of methods and procedures demonstrating original thinking and resulting in extraordinary tangible and/or intangible benefits.
- C. **Entry-Level Awards.** The SSA recognizes on-going superior service in one of the following categories and criteria:
- (1) **Management and Supervision.** Includes employees who accomplish work through the direction of other employees. Managers, supervisors, and team leaders may be nominated under this category. Nominees' achievements must reflect contributions to mission or strategic goals; innovations in resources management, leadership, or process; and procedural improvement.
  - (2) **Scientific Achievement.** Includes employees working in the scientific occupational groups, such as biologist, hydrologists, etc. Nominees' achievements must reflect contributions in providing decision makers with reliable scientific information, fostering outstanding environmental stewardship, notable scientific accomplishments, assessing/predicting environmental changes, innovations in their area of expertise, or process and procedural improvement.
  - (3) **Professional Achievement.** The professional achievement category is designed for engineers, accountants, etc. Nominees' achievements must reflect contributions to dollar savings, quality improvement, important project completion, or process and procedural improvement.
  - (4) **Administrative or Technical Support.** Includes employees in administrative or technical management, budget, finance, information technology, HR, etc. Nominees' achievements must reflect significant acts or services that materially



# Reclamation Manual

## Directives and Standards

---

aid or effect the successful accomplishment of a particularly difficult operation, project, or assignment that reflects on the individual or Reclamation, economy of operation, or a process and procedural improvement.

- (5) **Clerical/Support Services.** Includes employees whose typical responsibilities involve processing transactions, performing office support, and completing miscellaneous clerical and assistance duties. Nominees' achievements must reflect consistent superior performance related to assigned duties, direct assistance through actions or ingenuity that are beneficial to the organization, active contributions to the overall mission, economy of operation, or a process and procedural improvement deemed deserving of special recognition.

### 6. **Requirements, Formatting, and Processing for all Honor Award Nominations.**

- A. Citations must be clearly written, in plain language, and with sufficient detail so a layman can understand the contributions of the nominee. Award nominations must contain specific examples of accomplishments to clearly show the nominee meets the awards criteria.
- B. See Appendix A for *Recommendation and Approval of Awards*, DI-451, Appendix B to identify responsible parties and coordination of the surnaming and review process, Appendix C for formatting instructions, and Appendix D for information on proper signature block approvals.

### 7. **Review Period. The originating office will review this release every four years.**

## RECLAMATION MANUAL TRANSMITTAL SHEET

Effective Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Release No. \_\_\_\_\_

Ensure all employees needing this information are provided a copy of this release.

### Reclamation Manual Release Number and Subject

### Summary of Changes

NOTE: This Reclamation Manual release applies to all Reclamation employees. When an exclusive bargaining unit exists, changes to this release may be subject to the provisions of collective bargaining agreements.

### Filing instructions

Remove Sheets

Insert Sheets

All Reclamation Manual releases are available at <http://www.usbr.gov/recman/>

Filed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_