



# Guide to Writing Award Nominations

## General Instructions for Writing Award Nominations

- Most require a substantial justification, 1-2 pages for honorary awards to a few paragraphs for a Superior Accomplishment Award (e.g. Special Act/Service Award, On-the-Spot Award, or Time Off Award)
- Most honorary awards require a separate citation that is limited to a specific number of words
- Honorary awards are great recognition for significant achievements

Tip: The key to writing good nominations is to specifically address the individual award criteria. Talk to the nominee about criteria you may not have sufficiently addressed.

## General Tips

- Read the award criteria before selecting the nominee
- Understand the submittal requirements
- If you are unclear about the award criteria or submittal requirements, ask for clarification
- Allow sufficient time to put the package together; ensure recognition is timely
- Interview the nominee and others knowledgeable of the nominee in order to gain clarification of what the event, project or act performed entailed, and hurdles they may have had to overcome to execute
- Review examples of other nominations that have been competitive

## Writing Tips

- Write short sentences that are concise and give specific detail
- Explain technical details in such a way that non-experts will understand, and spell out/define any unfamiliar acronyms
- Share examples of how your nominee has served as a role model and/or mentor for others where/when applicable
- Anecdotes, quotations from colleagues or patrons, specific numbers or statistics, etc. help strengthen your nomination
- Avoid sweeping generalities and make every sentence count
- Have someone proofread the nomination
- Remember, it's not the quantity of the nomination. It's the quality!

### Answer the "what" and "how."

- **WHAT** did the nominee(s) do?
  - Projects and/or activities above and beyond job descriptions
  - Any challenges or issues encountered and overcome

- **HOW** did the nominee(s) do it?
  - Initiative and/or leadership
  - Teamwork
  - Creativity and/or innovation
  - Behaviors and/or attitudes
  
- **WHAT** were the results and/or impacts?
  - What did the nominee(s) accomplish?
  - Are there specific benefits derived from those efforts

### Extracts from Award Justifications

**Specific** - She has calculated fragmentation distances and developed engineering controls to mitigate fragmentation effects and blast pressures during detonations. Her development of Calculation methods to specific fragmentation distances rather than using default distances is resulting in a \$24,000 cost savings per site with total cost avoidances of \$1.37 million for 57 sites.

**Quotes** - FBI Hazardous Devices School - "Excellent support. Quality work, reasonable cost and knowledgeable project management. She has developed a reputation with us as the person of choice for assistance in developing our explosive safety site plans."

**Leadership** - She leads by example, communicating openly, honestly and professionally and encourages team members to make independent decisions within their authority and capability and to come to her if they have questions.

**Professional Development** - To improve her knowledge and abilities within the OE Program, she went to the field with HNC's lead geophysicist and was trained in the operation of the geophysical sensors and navigation equipment. She also attends OE conferences and seminars and taught herself MicroStation in order to analyze and evaluate geophysical data.

### Sample Award Justification

See next page

## **Sample Award Justification**

The following is step-by-step outline that describes the sections and verbiage to justify an award: \*

**"During the period of (MMDDYYYY to MMDDYYYY)  
(EMPLOYEE/GROUP NAME) (description of accomplishment-list the duties  
and accomplishment the employee has done to deserve this Award).**

**This exceeded expectations as identified in the current performance plan by:**

Improving quality.  
Timely completion of the project.  
Increasing productivity.  
Overcoming adverse obstacles or working under unusual circumstances.  
Using unusual creativity.  
Saving the Government time and/or money.  
Increasing program effectiveness.

**As a result:**

Project acceptance.  
Savings in time, money, and/or material.  
More efficiency.  
Effectiveness.  
Technological advancement.  
Productivity increase.  
Improved levels of cooperation that will result in ...

**Therefore, we propose an award of (amount/hours)."**

**\* Note: The most recent governing statute/policy or specific award criteria requesting nominations prevails over information contained in this document.**