

How to Write Winning Awards

1. All awards should be written in narrative format.
2. Read the nominating form and judging criteria very carefully. Be sure you have adequately answered all the questions. It is especially unfortunate to see a candidate eliminated because critical, required information has been overlooked or omitted. Go back through each question after you have written your response and be sure you have answered the question. Make sure your nomination is free of grammatical errors and is easily understood.
3. Assume that the judge does not know your candidate. The judge is reading multiple nominations and is looking for the required information. Too much information can be as harmful as too little information. Don't make the judge read through wonderful, glowing language to find the real heart of the answer. Be direct and then support what you have to say with observation and fact. DO NOT use acronyms or if necessary, make sure you explain them as the judges come from each Service and US Coast Guard.
4. Don't think you have to keep your nomination a secret or do it by yourself. Most people are highly flattered that a colleague thinks enough of them to nominate them for an award. Talk to your nominee. Ask them the questions and listen for information you can use to support your own thoughts and ideas. Call other colleagues and discuss the nominee with them. Call people that work for and with the nominee. Gather as much information and background as possible. Be accurate. Don't guess or generalize. Give specific examples to reinforce what you are saying. Give several examples to show patterns or professional growth over time. Remember this is job related only.
5. Organize your thoughts carefully and follow the nominating form. Personalize. Focus on key questions on the nomination form and judging criteria: detail accomplishments and their impact; describe leadership abilities; and, describe how the nominee has made a difference in the organization. Don't just talk about what the person is/has done. Share what stands out. What makes this person outstanding? How have these accomplishments had an impact - on people and the profession? Create a unique picture of your applicant. What makes them stand out from all the rest? Consider how they have taken their position and made an impact for the organization.