

**[Advisory Opinion 1996-7]**

March 27, 1996

[Name1 withheld]  
Chevy Chase Fire Department, Inc.  
8001 Connecticut Avenue  
Chevy Chase, MD 20815-5935

Re: Awards For Volunteer Service

Dear [Name1 withheld]:

On March 6, 1996, the Montgomery County Ethics Commission considered your request for an opinion regarding the Fire Department's proposed issuance of monetary awards to two Montgomery County Firefighters. According to your letter, the firefighters have provided exemplary service on the Department's capital improvement project to renovate and expand the fire station. They have volunteered many off-duty hours to the project.

The Ethics Law allows public employees to accept honoraria and awards for achievement. See Article 19A-16(d)(8). Since the proposed gifts constitute awards for special achievement, they are not prohibited by the gift provisions in Article 19A-16(c). The Commission authorized a similar award in Opinion 91-15. Therefore, you have the Commission's authorization to make these awards.

During the course of our discussion on this subject, the Commission consulted with the County Attorney. The County Attorney has identified other legal issues that relate to your request. Please contact the County Attorney's Office to discuss these issues. We hope you will find this letter responsive to your request.

Very truly yours,  
[signed]  
Laurie B. Horvitz, Chair

LBH/jlw