



## Letter of Award Lifesaving Medal



To: Officer Chris Johnson  
From: Craig N. Meidl, Chief of Police  
Date: February 5, 2019  
Re: Lifesaving Award

The Lifesaving Award is given to department personnel who, by their immediate actions, have saved a human life under unusual and/or extraordinary circumstances. When the Special Awards Committee reviewed your nomination, it was clear that you are most deserving of this recognition. Sergeant Kernkamp recently nominated you for this award based on your actions outlined below.

*"On November 21, 2018, officers responded to a multi-car collision near the area of Rowan/Stone. The at-fault vehicle had reportedly collided into 5 different vehicles throughout a 3-5 block radius. The at-fault driver was believed to be intoxicated with the vehicle colliding into an Avista power pole. The car was said to be on fire with the driver trapped inside, possibly unconscious.*

*On scene within two minutes, he put the life and safety of the trapped driver above his own when he approached a vehicle engulfed in flames. Smoke filled the air both outside and inside the cab of the vehicle limiting his field of view. Officer Johnson attempted verbal commands to assist the driver, however he immediately recognized the driver was nearly unconscious, and not responding to his verbal stimuli. Officer Johnson reacted quickly and broke out the driver's side window after not being able to open the door to get the driver out to safety. The driver's foot was still stuck on the gas pedal and the engine had increased RPMs with the tires spinning on the grass. Once the window was open, Officer Johnson reached inside and unlocked the driver's door, cutting his own hand in multiple locations.*

*Officer Johnson quickly realized that if the driver was not removed from the vehicle, he would not be able to survive in such conditions and perish from smoke inhalation. Once the driver's door was open, Officer Johnson was forced to cut the seat belt off the driver and drag him out of the vehicle to a neighboring yard. Officer Johnson quickly grabbed two fire extinguishers and returned back to the vehicle to put the flames out to prevent an explosion from the fire. It should be noted that the heat was so extreme from the fire, that the soles of Officer Johnson's shoes melted and became deformed.*

*The senior Spokane Fire Department member on scene, Firefighter Marlin Thorman, advised that the male was suffering from a diabetic emergency with his blood sugar being critically low, in addition to the car being engulfed in flames and the cab filling up with smoke. He stated that without Officer Johnson's response and quick thinking, the male would have perished from smoke inhalation."*

Officer Johnson, the Lifesaving Medal is being awarded to you for your heroic actions in the incident outlined above. You will be awarded the Lifesaving Medal during the Annual Employee Awards Ceremony in March 2019 and a copy of this letter will be placed in your personnel file.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Craig N. Meidl".

Craig Meidl  
Chief of Police