



NEWS

MONTGOMERY COUNTY OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS
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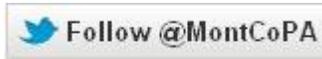
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 11, 2016

National Public Safety Telecommunicator Week
April 10-16, 2016

Eagleville, PA (April 11, 2016) – Each year, the second week of April is designated as National Public Safety Telecommunicator Week to honor first-responders for the critical, and often under-appreciated, work they do.

In the Montgomery County Emergency Operations Center, shifts of 25 men and women work around the clock, seven days a week, 365 days a year, to respond to emergency calls, dispatch police, fire, and EMS, and provide life-saving assistance to callers.

On an average day, Public Safety Telecommunicators process about 2,300 calls, manage over 2,100 emergency incidents, and maintain constant contact with nearly 700 police, fire, and EMS units across the 483 square miles of Montgomery County.

The week of April 10-16, 2016 is dedicated to honoring these professionals, also known as dispatchers or 911 operators, who serve as the heroes behind the scenes. In cases involving medical emergencies, they are trained to coach callers on Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), techniques to control bleeding, and even child birth instructions.

They work long 12-hour shifts saving lives, helping apprehend criminals, and reassure callers, and they maintain a cool professional demeanor while doing it.

Here are some tips for ways you can help these professionals get you the help that you need as quickly as possible:

- Call 9-1-1 **anytime** you need a first responder (police, fire, or EMS) to come out and provide assistance. Only call 10-digit lines for administrative needs, such as getting information for an insurance claim.
- Stay calm and speak clearly.
- Text to 9-1-1 is now available in Montgomery County if the phone's wireless service is provided by one of the four largest carriers: AT&T, Sprint, Verizon Wireless, or T-Mobile. Text to 9-1-1 has limitations, but is useful in an emergency when someone is unable to speak. **Call when you can, text when you must.**
- When calling from a wireless device, tell the 9-1-1 call taker the specific location of the emergency (municipality, address, street intersection, landmarks, highway mile marker, etc.), your cell phone number, the nature of the emergency, and the type of assistance needed.
- Stay on the line until the 9-1-1 call taker has obtained all of the information that is needed.
- If the signal is lost and you are disconnected, call back right away.
- If you are in a moving vehicle when calling 9-1-1 from a cell phone, be sure to stop the vehicle in a **safe** place. It is difficult to obtain all of the information needed if you are getting further from the emergency.
- If you dial 9-1-1 by mistake, **STAY ON THE LINE**. If you hang up, they will have to call you back and an officer will have to confirm that you are all right. Unfounded calls waste not only the time of the telecommunicator, but also patrol officers.