Flooding Response and Recovery

In the late afternoon hours of Thursday, July 11th, heavy rain began falling as lines of storms entered Montgomery County from the southwest. In just a few hours, 5 to 6 inches of rain fell in the far northern section of Montgomery County, with totals of 3 to 5 inches common in the north and west (dark red section near center of map). Commuting motorists became stuck in their vehicles as roads rapidly began to flood, while unsuspecting residents were trapped in their homes due to the rising waters.

Between the hours of 4 PM and midnight, Montgomery County fire and rescue agencies were dispatched to 60 water rescues within the county. Some of the "busiest" municipalities in terms of rescues were New Hanover Township (10), Upper Hanover Township (9), Douglass Township (7), Pottstown Borough (7), and Lower Pottsgrove Township (6).

At 5 PM, the Montgomery County Emergency Operations Center was activated to monitor conditions and coordinate the response. A few minutes later, the Montgomery County Urban Search and Rescue Team (left) and Cheltenham Township's high-water vehicle were deployed to the area to assist with the large number of rescues. US&R successfully completed rescues of 6 individuals and the evacuation through high water of 7 others.

In support of the recovery process, the Department of Public Safety contacted Southeastern Pennsylvania VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster) partners to discuss needs and resources. As a result, flood buckets provided by the Salvation Army and dehumidifiers provided by the Pennsylvania State VOAD were obtained by the Department of Public Safety and then distributed to affected municipalities. The Department of Public Safety also coordinated delivery of a water buffalo, donated by Aqua Pennsylvania, for Green Lane Borough residents in need of potable water.
Eleven municipalities reported damage to public property, infrastructure, homes, and businesses. Reported damages to public property and infrastructure total approximately $650,000, while roughly 120 homes and businesses were affected by the floods. 20 of these homes and businesses sustained major damage, resulting in displacement of residents or suspension of business operations.

The Department of Public Safety is still collecting information to determine eligibility for a Small Business Administration (SBA) disaster declaration. It must be demonstrated that at least 25 properties have sustained an uninsured loss of 40% or more to qualify. An SBA declaration would allow individuals sustaining that loss to apply for a low interest government loan to assist with repairs to and replacement of damaged property.

The Department of Public Safety would like to thank all of the agencies that assisted in the response to this incident.

**Priority Radio Traffic**

Responders from all disciplines are reminded to abide by Priority Traffic radio procedures when advised to do so by the Emergency Communications Center.

The Department of Public Safety received numerous complaints about local agencies whose personnel failed to operate under Priority Traffic conditions during the storm response on Thursday, July 11th.

Even if a frequency you are operating on seems “quiet” or “not busy,” every transmission you make is still putting load on the radio system, bringing it closer to or over capacity. A longwinded message requesting PECO for a wire down in the east may have the unintended effect of “bonking” a water rescue team asking for help in the west.

Any responder with questions about the Department of Public Safety’s Priority Traffic procedure can contact Dennis Orangers at doranger@montcopa.org.

**Radio Battery Replacement**

The Department of Public Safety recommends that agencies start planning to replace their APX radio batteries as some of the radios have been in use since 2016. Lithium-Ion batteries trade light weight and high power for a shorter life span and typically last 1.5 - 2 years. Of course, these numbers can vary significantly depending on how the radios are used, so please take this as a general guideline and not an absolute rule.

Remember: it is very important that you do not charge the battery while the radio is turned on - this will dramatically shorten the life of your battery!

Questions? Contact the Radio Shop at (610) 631-6511 for assistance.
**Bomb Squad Receives State Police Commissioner’s Award**

In May and June of 2018, a series of mysterious explosions in Bucks County prompted a multi-agency, cross-jurisdictional response and investigation. With the assistance of the Montgomery County Sheriff’s Office Bomb and Hazardous Device Disposal Unit, a team of federal, state, and local law enforcement personnel apprehended a suspect and charged him with possessing weapons of mass destruction and other crimes. The suspect is currently awaiting trial.

This June, the members of the Bomb and Hazardous Device Disposal Unit were honored at the Pennsylvania State Police Department Awards Ceremony and were presented with the Commissioner’s Area IV Command Significant Achievement Award.

Congratulations to our partners at the Sheriff’s Office!

**Emergency Medical Technician News**

On Thursday, August 8th at 7 PM, approximately 50 students will celebrate the completion of the Emergency Medical Technician course with a graduation ceremony at the Public Safety Training Campus. The keynote speaker will be Dylan Ferguson, Director of the PA Bureau of Emergency Medical Services. There will be light refreshments and recruiting tables after the ceremony. If you wish to attend, please RSVP to emstraining@montcopa.org.

These students **(right)** in our accelerated summer Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) program are already more than halfway towards obtaining their certification!

Interested in becoming an EMT? The Montgomery County EMS Training Institute is offering the course on Tuesdays and Thursdays (7 PM - 10 PM) and occasional Saturdays and Sundays (8:30 AM - 4 PM) from October 1, 2019 until April 30, 2020. All classes will be held at the Public Safety Training Campus (1175 Conshohocken Road, Conshohocken, PA 19428). Learn more about the program and register today at [www.emstrainingcenter.org](http://www.emstrainingcenter.org).
On Monday, July 1st, School Safety Coordinator Steve Beck was presented with a proclamation from the Office of the District Attorney by Chief County Detective Samuel Gallen, recognizing Steve’s contributions to law enforcement and public safety in Montgomery County. Steve retired from MCDPS with 11 years of service on June 28th.

On Saturday, July 13th, the Montgomery County US&R Team responded to the city of Bethlehem to assist with a technical rescue. A subject had climbed to the top of one of the towers at the Bethlehem Steel complex on Friday and was refusing to cooperate with police. The subject was safely taken into custody.

On Wednesday, July 17th, Department of Public Safety Emergency Management staff transported a shipment of dehumidifiers from PEMA to the Montgomery County Emergency Operations Center. These appliances will be loaned to residents who are struggling to clean out their homes after the July 11th flooding.
On Wednesday, July 10th, 25 members of Montgomery County Fire Academy Class 1902 and eight members of Class 1903 (Summer Essentials Program) celebrated the completion of the Pennsylvania Entry Level Firefighter Training program with a graduation ceremony at the Public Safety Training Campus. Deputy Chief Girt Allerton of the Philadelphia Fire Department provided the commencement address. Chief Allerton is a Montgomery County resident and a former nurse, naval officer, volunteer firefighter, EMT, and Paramedic.

These men and women will protect their communities as firefighters in 28 volunteer and combination fire companies in Montgomery, Berks, Carbon, Chester, Delaware, and Lehigh Counties.

Congratulations and best wishes to the following graduates:

Firefighter Aaron Abrams, Penn Wynne
Firefighter Elijah Anselm, Barren Hill
Firefighter Matthew Bochanski, Bon Air
Firefighter Mark Brandon, Flourtown
Firefighter Christian Brassington, Jefferson
Firefighter Jeremy Davis, Royersford
Firefighter Michael Drewnowski, Goshen
Firefighter Edward Dvir, Union
Firefighter Patrick Fowler, Lionville
Firefighter Scott Friedman, Union
Firefighter Angela Gibilante, Worcester
Firefighter Anthony Gulen, Trappe
Firefighter Matthew Hautzinger, Lower Frederick
Firefighter Kyle Hodges, Lionville
Firefighter Robert Kelly, Gilbertsville
Firefighter Jason Marsh, Brookline
Firefighter Scott Martz Jr., Plymouth
Firefighter Kyle Merkel, Skippack
Firefighter Ashley Miller, Fogelsville
Firefighter Theodore Moore, Centre Square
Firefighter Kendal Moyer, Earl Township
Firefighter Nicholas Parrillo, Wyndmoor
Firefighter Garritt Pickford, New Hanover
Firefighter Morgan Reice, Limerick
Firefighter William Renshaw, Black Rock
Firefighter Dylan Romano, Worcester
Firefighter Frederick Rusinski Jr., Birdsboro-Union
Firefighter Ahmad Saunders, Lansdowne
Firefighter Kevin Sciba, New Hanover
Firefighter Nicholas Sonetto, Fort Washington
Firefighter Brett Szabo, Lower Saucon
Firefighter Joshua Taylor, Skippack
Firefighter William Wilfong V, Perkiomen

Firefighter Kyle Merkel of the Skippack Fire Company (left) received the award for highest grade in Interior Firefighter for Class 1902, while Firefighter Scott Friedman of the Union Fire Association (right) received the award for highest grade in Interior Firefighter for Class 1903.

New this month: a copy of the PowerPoint presentation displayed during the Fire Academy graduation will now be available on the Department of Public Safety’s website. Visit www.montcopa.org/136/Fire-Academy and then look under Quick Links on the right side of the page.
Criminal Intelligence Product Available for Law Enforcement

The Department of Public Safety recently obtained NC4 Street Smart, a criminal intelligence product for law enforcement. This platform, accessible by police officers via MDCs, will provide real-time crime information, analysis, and mapping. The $170,000.00 purchase was made possible by funding received through the Homeland Security Grant Program.

Enrollment in the Department of Public Safety Records Management System, while encouraged, is not a requirement for participation in the NC4 Street Smart program. David Daugherty, Assistant Director of Homeland Security & Intelligence, will reach out to police departments with additional information in the near future. The Department of Public Safety would like to thank the agencies that assisted with the review of this product.

Methacton School Nurses Visit the EOC

Earlier this month, eight school nurses from the Methacton School District recently met for an in-service day at the Montgomery County Emergency Operations Center.

Methacton is a public-school district located in central Montgomery County, serving approximately 13,000 households within Lower Providence and Worcester Townships. The District is composed of four elementary schools, an upper elementary school (Grades 5-6), an intermediate school (Grades 7-8), and a high school. The total enrollment is approximately 5,000 students.

The nurses received an overview of the Department of Public Safety’s services and programs, including Pulse Point and Smart 9-1-1, as well as a review of Montgomery County’s Medical Counter Measures – Strategic National Stockpile Plan. In addition, they received training in active threat awareness (run-hide-fight), tourniquets, and bleeding control (B-CON). The nurses were also provided with Naloxone for their schools and toured the 9-1-1 center and Emergency Operations Center.

The Department of Public Safety would like to thank Cheryl Peiffer, RN, Coordinator for Nursing Services, who organized this in-service day.

If you would like to schedule a presentation and tour for your group, please contact the Department of Public Safety at 610-631-6500.
Career Opportunities

The Department of Public Safety is now accepting applications for the following positions:

The **Part Time Radiological Planner** is responsible for radiological emergency response planning and training. The Radiological Planner produces and reviews emergency plans for response to incidents at the Limerick Generating Station, and coordinates county, municipal, and school participation in associated drills.

This position requires attendance at evening and weekend meetings and is subject to 24 hour, 7-day call for weather, hazardous materials, and man-made emergencies in addition to Limerick Generating Station response.

**Telecommunicators** are the public’s primary points of contact when requesting a response by public safety resources. They promote the Department’s core values of integrity, respect, and customer service without compromise. Telecommunicators receive calls from the public and accurately assign requests for police, fire, emergency medical units, and other public safety resources.

Telecommunicators are considered "essential personnel" and will be required to report for work regardless of weather conditions.

To learn more about these positions or to apply now, visit [www.montcopa.org/jobs](http://www.montcopa.org/jobs).

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**Specialized Resource Profile**

The **Tactical Communications Team (TCT)** is a group of experienced Department of Public Safety telecommunicators who are trained in ICS and emergency management functions to support on-scene incident command.

When a response request is received by the Communications Center, on-duty TCT members deploy Field Comm 3, a 40’ mobile command vehicle equipped with dispatch consoles able to handle all on-scene communications.

The Team will also deploy Field Comm 4, a Ford F-250 equipped with a large cache of portable radios, a helicopter downlink, Gridless Core portable batteries, lighting, and tents.

Request a TCT/FC3/FC4 response through the Communications Center.
Emergency Management Certifications

Over the last month, several of our municipal partners were presented with their Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency certifications. Individuals involved in municipal emergency management in the Commonwealth can achieve certifications in three levels: basic, advanced, and professional. Each level requires the applicant to complete numerous training classes, as well as attend Department of Public Safety monthly meetings.

While appointed municipal Emergency Management Coordinators are required by Commonwealth law to obtain basic and advanced certifications, all levels are voluntary for other staff members. Despite this, many of our municipalities have gone above and beyond the requirements, certifying their Coordinators at the professional level and other staff at basic, advanced, or professional.

Anyone involved in municipal emergency management in Montgomery County who is interested in obtaining their PEMA certifications can contact Heather Stem at hstem@montcopa.org for additional information.

Individuals receiving their certifications this month include:

Professional Level

Roy Land, Montgomery County Department of Public Safety Staff
Dan Miller, Royersford Borough Emergency Management Coordinator (below, left)
Shannon Schreur, Upper Merion Township Emergency Management Staff

Basic Level

Taylor Hawkins, Montgomery County Department of Public Safety Staff
David Hummel, Royersford Borough Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator (below, right)
Brandon Pfaff, Royersford Borough Emergency Management Staff
Timothy Pristatskiy, Royersford Borough Emergency Management Staff
Richard Shuler, Limerick Township Emergency Management Staff (above)