Montgomery County Continues Vaccinations for First Responders

As of close of business on Wednesday, January 27th, the Department of Public Safety, in coordination with the Montgomery County Office of Public Health, had administered 1,891 first doses and 682 second doses of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine to police, fire, and EMS personnel at the Public Safety Training Campus.

Clinics are being announced through Countywide chiefs’ associations and via Everbridge as soon as Department of Public Safety staff are notified of available doses. Any active first responder employed by or volunteering for a Montgomery County law enforcement, fire, or Emergency Medical Services agency who has not yet received the first dose of the vaccine and is interested in doing so should contact Public Affairs Coordinator Todd Stieritz at tstierit@montcopa.org. Your email will be added to a list to be notified directly, along with notifications to the Countywide chiefs’ associations, when the next clinics become available.

Any interested responder will have to complete a pre-screening survey and provide a name and phone number for an agency point of contact (e.g. chief) to allow for verification of active membership or employment. Please also note that an agency ID, badge, or alternate proof of employment or status (e.g. letter from chief of department) will be required to gain access to the vaccination clinic. Anyone whose identity cannot be confirmed or who has not registered for an appointment will be turned away.

The Department of Public Safety and Office of Public Health ask for your continued patience as we strive to vaccinate our critical workforce as quickly as possible.

Radio System Transition Continues

The Department of Public Safety has received numerous inquiries about the removal of the old radio system from mobile and portable radios in the field. Department staff fully understand that the old system still needs to be removed from the radios and plans are in place to remove those channels, while performing some other upgrades to the radios, in the coming months.

There is no need to reach out to MCDPS regarding the removal of the old system. Once we are ready, we will contact all of the necessary users.
January Retirements and Anniversaries

On Tuesday, January 5th, **Thomas Sullivan** retired after working nearly 19 years as Director of the Montgomery County Department of Public Safety. Tom previously served as Fire Marshal and Director of Emergency Services for Upper Moreland Township from 1989 until 2002 and is a Life Member of the Wyndmoor Fire Company. Tom (second from left) is pictured here with Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency Director Randy Padfield (far left), Delaware County Department of Emergency Services Director Timothy Boyce (second from right), and Montgomery County Department of Public Safety Interim Director Michael Vest (far right).

The Department of Public Safety would like to sincerely thank all of the police, fire, EMS, and emergency management agencies and other public safety partners who participated in our drive-by, socially distanced retirement celebration for Director Sullivan on his last day, as well as all of those who were unable to attend but sent their regards. To view a video of the event, visit https://youtu.be/IDiVQC0FqlM.

Thank you for everything, Tom, and have a safe, happy, and healthy retirement!

**Herbert Adams**, Professional Standards Coordinator at the Montgomery County Fire Academy, retired on Friday, January 8th. During his 21 years with Montgomery County, Herb oversaw all 11 levels of certification testing offered at the Fire Academy. Herb was a dedicated employee who often worked long days and completed tedious work that paid dividends for the Fire Academy and for Montgomery County firefighters. Outside of work, Herb also serves on the Board of Directors of the Bryn Mawr Fire Company.

Best wishes on a very safe, happy, and healthy retirement, Herb!

On Tuesday, January 19th, Fire & EMS Communications Manager **Dennis Orangers** celebrated his 30-year anniversary of working for the Department of Public Safety. Make no mistake by the placement of this information: Dennis is not retiring!

Dennis started with MCDPS as a fire and EMS dispatcher in 1991. He held this role for more than a decade before moving on to an administrative position. His knowledge of the fire service and EMS is invaluable to the Department of Public Safety.

Dennis, who also serves as Chief of the Swedeland Fire Company in Upper Merion Township, is pictured here with his wife Sue and son Dominic. Thank you for your service, Dennis, and here’s to the next 30 years!
Students Complete Ice Rescue and Emergency Response Training

In mid-January, 16 students taking the Ice Rescue and Emergency Response class plunged into the frigid waters of Lake Harmony to practice rescuing victims from the ice and complete the training program to receive certification from the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission.

The program familiarizes rescuers with the safest and most effective methods of dealing with an ice emergency.

Over the course of two evenings in the classroom, one evening in the pool, and the day at the lake, students learned how to identify different types of ice conditions, hazards and escape routes, and the proper equipment and techniques to perform a rescue.

Agencies that may respond to ice rescues can request the course by contacting Rob Carovillano, Fire/Rescue & Industrial Program Coordinator at the Montgomery County Fire Academy, at rcarovillano@montcopa.org or 610-278-3500, ext. 6610.

Legacy Station Printout System to be Decommissioned

The Department of Public Safety has been working with Motorola on updates to the Countywide alphanumeric paging system, which will no longer be able to support over-the-air station printing for fire and EMS after March 15, 2021. This change does not affect portable alphanumeric (“alpha”) pagers used for incident notification.

If your agency is still in need of paper printouts, they will, as of March 15th, be delivered exclusively via email. The same information contained in the legacy version of the incident printout will be sent via email and can be printed out locally if needed.

Please contact Fire & EMS Communications Manager Dennis Orangers at doranger@montcopa.org as soon as possible to start the transition process. Agencies making the switch should add mcdps@mcad911.com to their Safe Senders List or contacts list so that the printouts don’t end up in Spam or Junk Mail folders.

If your agency already receives email printouts, no action is required. If your agency currently receives legacy printouts sent via alphanumeric paging technology but no longer has a need for incident printouts, no action is required, and your printouts will end on or around March 15th.

Daily and monthly emailed reports are not affected by this change. Any agency interested in these products may contact Dennis Orangers at doranger@montcopa.org for more information.
Low-Interest Loans Available for Damage Sustained from Tropical Storm Isaias

On December 21st, the U.S. Small Business Administration announced that low-interest disaster loans will be available for Montgomery County residents, businesses, and nonprofits affected by Tropical Storm Isaias on August 4, 2020. Business Physical Disaster Loans, Economic Injury Disaster Loans, and Home Disaster Loans are all available.

Applicants may apply online using the Electronic Loan Application (ELA) via the SBA’s secure website at disasterloan.sba.gov.

Businesses and individuals may also obtain information and loan applications by calling the SBA’s Customer Service Center at 1-800-659-2955 (1-800-877-8339 for the deaf and hard-of-hearing), or by emailing DisasterCustomerService@sba.gov. Loan applications can also be downloaded at sba.gov/disaster. Completed applications should be mailed to: U.S. Small Business Administration, Processing and Disbursement Center, 14925 Kingsport Road, Fort Worth, TX 76155.

The filing deadline to return applications for physical property damage is February 16, 2021. The deadline to return economic injury applications is September 20, 2021.

For more information, see the January 2021 notices or visit https://bit.ly/3tgi6Rp.

Online Hazardous Materials Operations Refreshers Available

Last month, the Montgomery County Fire Academy released its Spring 2021 training schedule. Numerous online and hybrid offerings are available, in addition to the regular slate of in-person courses.

This semester, the Fire Academy will offer several sessions of the Hazardous Materials Operations Refresher fully online. Both daytime and evening offerings are available. In addition, one session, focusing on flammable liquids, will be offered in-person at the Fire Academy later in the spring. Upcoming sessions include:

- **Online**
  - February 9 & 11 (8:30 – 11:30 AM)
  - February 10 & 17 (7:00 – 10:00 PM)
  - March 8 & 15 (7:00 – 10:00 PM)

- **In-person**
  - April 13 & 15 (6:45 – 10:45 PM)

Be sure to reserve your spot in one of these courses by registering soon. To view the complete training schedule, visit https://www.montcopa.org/1006/Training-Schedule.
Recent Happenings

On Monday, January 4th, several members of the Montgomery County Municipal Fire Officers’ Association came to the Emergency Operations Center to present Director Thomas Sullivan with a plaque in honor of his retirement and in gratitude for “his leadership and dedication to the fire service community of Montgomery County” (quote taken from plaque inscription).

On Thursday, January 21st, Telecommunicator Amanda Brady was interviewed outside the EOC by Reporter Jenna Meissner as part of PHL17’s Remarkable Women contest. Amanda was selected as a finalist after being nominated by her husband, Jim. We may be biased, but we think Amanda should be chosen as the winner!

On Monday, January 25th, Department of Public Safety and Montgomery County Office of Public Health staff started administration of the first round of second doses of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine for emergency responders at the Public Safety Training Campus. The final week in January marked 28 days from the initial clinic at the PSTC, running December 28th-30th.
Cradlepoint Modem Deployment Continues

The Department of Public Safety will soon be receiving another batch of modems and antennas for emergency responder vehicles acquired through the Homeland Security Grant Program. Department staff have so far deployed a total of 330 modems to 32 police departments, approximately 200 of which are already installed and in use. This next batch of modems will allow the Department to outfit the remainder of police units throughout Montgomery County.

Several of the remaining police departments have already completed the process to submit information to the Department of Public Safety and they will be deployed first from this new batch. If your police department has not yet submitted the below information, please do so as soon as possible.

In order to receive the new modems, please email the following information to DPSCADHelp@montcopa.org:

- Agency Name
- Agency Contact(s) who are authorized to sign for and pick up equipment for the agency
- Vehicle list with car numbers of vehicles currently equipped with Sierra Wireless modems

All responder agencies are required to switch to these new modems as the Sierra Wireless modems are end-of-life and are no longer being repaired by the manufacturer.

The modems and antennas are being provided free of charge in a 1-for-1 swap for the old Sierra Wireless modems. Agencies are responsible for installation charges and carrier data plans. These new modems and antennas provide better speed and coverage as they capable of accessing all 4G frequencies, many of which had not been deployed by the cell carriers during initial Sierra Wireless deployment.

These new devices, along with upgrades made to our servers, now allow us to be carrier agnostic, meaning if another wireless carrier has better coverage in your response area, you are now able to utilize them. Agencies MUST advise the Department of Public Safety before any carrier changes are made and you MUST have a Cradlepoint installed before doing so. The Sierra Wireless modems are tied to Verizon and cannot be switched.

Windows 7 End-of-Life for MDCs Announced

The Department of Public Safety recently completed a Pennsylvania State Police CLEAN (Commonwealth Law Enforcement Assistance Network) Technical Audit. To maintain CLEAN and CJIS (Criminal Justice Information Services) Compliance, as of July 1, 2021, Windows 7 based Mobile Data Computers (MDCs) will no longer be permitted to connect to the Public Safety network for CAD or MPS (Mobile for Public Safety). All MDCs (police, fire and EMS) must be upgraded to Windows 10 Pro prior to this date.

If you are still using Windows 7 after June 30, 2021, your computer will be blocked from the network. If your hardware is aging, now is the time to start planning for replacements.

If your agency needs assistance with hardware specifications or upgrade assistance, please email DPSCADHelp@montcopa.org and Department of Public Safety – Technology Division staff will be happy to assist where possible.
Career Opportunities

The Department of Public Safety is currently accepting applications for several openings. Click on the hyperlinks below for full job descriptions and to apply online.

**Homeland Security/Intelligence**
- Intelligence Data Analyst

**Technology Division**
- Senior Technician

**Office of the Medical Director**
- Mobile Integrated Health Coordinator
- Mobile Integrated Health - Paramedic

**COVID-19 Pandemic: Key Information for First Responders**

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

The Department of Public Safety continues to fulfill critical need resource requests for first responder agencies during the COVID-19 crisis. As normal supply chains continue to come back online, please utilize your local procurement procedures prior to submitting resource requests. If you do have a critical PPE need, please submit all resource requests to EOCwatchdesk@montcopa.org.

**Exposure Reporting Process**

If you are a first responder (law enforcement, fire, EMS, or emergency management) and believe you were exposed to COVID-19 in the course of your duties, follow these steps:

1) Immediately notify your supervisor or agency infection control officer.

2) Avoid contact with others, maintain social distance (at least 6 feet), and self-monitor for symptoms (check temperature twice a day and watch for fever, cough, or shortness of breath). You will receive formal instructions to quarantine, if necessary, from the Montgomery County Office of Public Health.

3) Complete the First Responder Self-Report Form: http://episurvey.mcad911.com/EpiInfoWebSurvey/Home/a85581e8-ef39-478d-ad2c-76bfb1a44b50. This form is used to formally document the impact of COVID-19 on the community as well as document the source of a potential exposure.

4) Register to be tested. You can receive a test at any one of the 6 county-run test sites (https://data-montcopa.opendata.arcgis.com/pages/covid-testing-page), through your Primary Care Physician, or at a commercial lab.

First responders with exposure-related questions may contact EMS Field Specialist Ed Martin, Jr. (emartin@montcopa.org) or Chief Medical Officer and Regional EMS Medical Director Dr. Alvin Wang (awang@montcopa.org). With immediate concerns, call (610) 631-6500.