DPS to Celebrate National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week in April

This year, Sunday, April 11th through Saturday, April 17th is designated as National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week. The Department of Public Safety would like to take this opportunity to recognize our true first first-responders for the critical, and often under-appreciated, work that they do.

At the Montgomery County Emergency Operations Center in Eagleville, shifts of approximately 25 public safety professionals work around the clock, seven days a week, 365 days a year, answering emergency calls, providing lifesaving assistance to those callers, and dispatching police, fire, and EMS responders. On an average day, our telecommunicators answer almost 2,200 calls, manage nearly 2,300 emergency incidents, and maintain constant contact with approximately 700 police, fire, and EMS units across the 487 square miles of Montgomery County.

If you see a public safety telecommunicator during the week of April 11th-17th (or any day of the year!) please thank them for their service! While almost never featured in the spotlight, our 9-1-1 telecommunicators, technicians, trainers, supervisors, managers, tactical dispatchers, IT support, and administrative staff work tirelessly to protect the citizens and first responders of Montgomery County.

Interested in joining our 9-1-1 team? We are now hiring! Be sure to apply before May 17, 2021 for a class to start training in mid-July. For additional information, visit our recruiting website at www.mcdps.org or read the full job description and apply at www.montcopa.org/jobs (scroll down to Public Safety).

To learn more about National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week, visit www.npstw.org.
Future First Responder COVID-19 Vaccine Clinics Announced

As of close of business on Thursday, March 25th, the Department of Public Safety, in coordination with the Montgomery County Office of Public Health, had administered 2,635 first doses and 2,370 second doses of the Moderna and Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines to police, fire, and EMS personnel at the Public Safety Training Campus.

The Department is pleased to share that we have been allocated a small number of additional doses and will be hosting a series of drive-thru clinics at the Public Safety Training Campus over the next several weeks. If you are a Montgomery County first responder, have not yet received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, and are interested in receiving it, please email Public Affairs Coordinator Todd Stieritz at tstierit@montcopa.org for additional information.

When signing up for a clinic, you must be available for your second dose on the stipulated date. There is no flexibility in scheduling and no accommodations will be made. On both dates, you must bring an agency ID, badge, or other proof of status as a Montgomery County first responder. Anyone who cannot confirm responder status will be turned away.

Preparations Underway for Limerick Generating Station Exercise

The time has come to prepare for this year’s Limerick Generating Station (LGS) drill, which is scheduled for **Tuesday, November 16, 2021**. In advance of the exercise, Emergency Management Coordinators (EMC) within the 10-mile Emergency Planning Zone (EPZ) are required to perform a review of their Radiological Emergency Response Plan (RERP). As the review deadline of **Friday, May 14th** is less than two months away, EMCs are encouraged to start this process immediately.

In addition, police, fire, EMS, and municipal emergency management personnel whose agencies are located within the EPZ should complete Radiological Emergency Response Training by **Friday, October 1st**. Training will be supplied according to your scheduling needs but will be delivered on a first come, first served basis. Due to COVID-19, training will be offered in a virtual format in addition to normal in-person delivery. Please contact Emergency Preparedness Specialist Jake Frye at jfrye@montcopa.org to schedule your RERP review and training as soon as possible.

Fire Police Task Force Modifies Dispatch Procedure

The Montgomery County Volunteer Fire Police Association has been working with the Department of Public Safety to develop a modified dispatch procedure for alerting large numbers of fire police officers to major incidents or for instances when personnel are needed more quickly and efficiently. Fire agencies are asked to contact the Montgomery County Fire Police Task Force Coordinator Carroll Davis at cdavisjr@aol.com for details on pager programming and to obtain a copy of the program Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) sheet.
Department of Public Safety Implements Full Time Logistics Program

Over the past several months, Department of Public Safety staff have been working tirelessly to improve and formalize the Department’s logistics program. Currently based out of a leased warehouse in Oaks, operations will transition to a new garage and warehouse complex to be constructed near the Emergency Operations Center at the County’s Eagleville Campus later this year.

To manage the process of centralized inventory management, a team of four full-time staff has been hired. These individuals will be responsible for all aspects of equipment and supply distribution, including pre-planned event deployment, for both regular Department assets and COVID-19 specific materials. The logistics program is structured under the Department’s Division of Emergency Management.

In February, the Department of Public Safety onboarded a full-time Logistics Program Manager, Jeremy Miles. Jeremy has been a volunteer with the Limerick Fire Department for the past 16 years and previously worked for Trappe Ambulance and the Frederick County (MD) Fire Department. As a member of the Montgomery County EMS Strike Team, he assisted with the deployment for Hurricane Gustav relief in 2008. In 2013, Jeremy left for active duty with the U.S. Army where he served four years as a medic with two combat deployments to Afghanistan. His wide variety of experience and knowledge will help him facilitate distribution of supplies to the community, first responders, and public health personnel, both during the COVID-19 pandemic and into the future. Jeremy has a wife and two young children.

jmiles@montcopa.org
(610) 278-5901
Logistics Warehouse

Earlier this month, three Logistics Program Specialists, Eli Anselm, Blaze Lynch, and Alexis Wilmot, were added to the team.

Eli Anselm holds a Bachelor of Arts in Politics from the New School University. Before joining the Department of Public Safety’s logistics program, Eli worked for the U.S. Department of the Interior - Bureau of Land Management as a wildland firefighter. He is also a member of Barren Hill Volunteer Fire Company in Whitemarsh Township and has previous work experience as an EMT.

eanselm@montcopa.org
(610) 278-5918
Logistics Warehouse
Blaze Lynch, hailing from Pennsburg, graduated from the Montgomery County Community College last year with an Associate’s Degree in Fire Science. He is a volunteer with both the East Greenville Fire Company and Harleysville Area Emergency Medical Services.

blynch@montcopa.org
(610) 278-5904
Logistics Warehouse

Alexis Wilmot graduated from Springfield Township High School and attended the Montgomery County Community College for Fire Science/Emergency Management. Prior to accepting her new position, Lexi worked as a part-time Firefighter/EMT with the Conshohocken, Harmonville, Plymouth, and Centre Square Fire Companies. She first started in the field of emergency services as a volunteer firefighter, engineer, and administrative director with the Flourtown Fire Company.

awilmot@montcopa.org
(610) 278-5962
Logistics Warehouse

Fire Police Association Updating Countywide Contact Information

The Montgomery County Volunteer Fire Police Association (MCVFPA) is updating their contact information for fire police agencies throughout the County. This will help with day-to-day communication between the MCVFPA and County agencies as well as with future planned event coordination.

Agencies are asked to send current names, emails, and phone numbers for fire chiefs, fire police captains, police chiefs, and, if applicable, municipal coordinators for fire police help requests to MCVFPA Commissioner Carroll Davis at cdavisjr@aol.com.

Department of Public Safety Employee Honored by Local Media

On Tuesday, March 9th, our very own 9-1-1 Telecommunicator Amanda Brady was featured on the PHL17 morning news as part of the Remarkable Women of Philadelphia contest!

Outside of work, Amanda volunteers for the Montgomery County Critical Incident Stress Management Team and is also an avid photographer. After being nominated by her husband, Jim, Amanda was selected as one of four finalists. A very well-deserved recognition! To view the news clip, click here.
Basic Firefighter Training Well Underway for Class 2101

The first class to begin basic firefighter training in 2021 has completed the first two of four courses required in the Pennsylvania Entry Level Firefighter curriculum and will start the third course in April. Check out additional pictures of the class on page 9.

The 58 students of Class 2101 started in January with Introduction to the Fire Service and just wrapped up Fire Ground Support where they learned about water supply, ropes and knots, fire behavior, and SCBA operations.

The students will start the Exterior Firefighter class in early April, which will cover raising ladders, building construction, forcible entry, hose advancement, and numerous other topics.

An up-to-date listing of spring and early summer courses being offered by the Montgomery County Fire Academy is available at https://www.montcopa.org/1006/Training-Schedule.

Cradlepoint Modem Deployment Starts for EMS Agencies

The Department of Public Safety is ready to move to the next phase of deploying modems and antennas, acquired through the Homeland Security Grant Program, for emergency responder vehicles. Department staff have so far deployed a total of about 450 modems to about 45 police departments. We are now ready to begin deploying equipment to all EMS agencies throughout Montgomery County.

In order to receive the new modems, EMS agencies should 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 identification 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 implementation.

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.
March Moments

Many thanks to the Hatfield Township Police Benevolent Association and the officers of the Hatfield Township Police Department for providing delicious Chick-fil-A boxed lunches for all four shifts of our 9-1-1 telecommunicators during the final week of February. We really appreciate your support!

Despite a continuing pandemic, several weeks of bitter cold temperatures, and numerous winter storms, the dedicated members of the Montgomery County Hazardous Materials Response Team never stop training! Over the past few months, the team has spent dozens of hours refining their skills in hazard identification, ICS form completion, Incident Action Planning, PPE selection, and decontamination.

On Thursday, March 11th, the Montgomery County Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) Team and Department of Public Safety EMS staff assisted local responders with a technical rescue on Iron Bridge Drive in Perkiomen Township. The patient, whose hand had been caught in a piece of machinery, was transported to the hospital via JeffSTAT medical helicopter.
Technology Division Reminds Responders of Ongoing Projects

Legacy Station Printout System Decommissioned

As of March 15th, the Countywide alphanumeric paging system will no longer support over-the-air station printing for fire and EMS. This change does not affect portable alphanumeric (“alpha”) pagers used for incident notification.

Agencies in need of paper printouts will have to transition to receiving them via email and printing them out locally. If your agency has not yet done so, 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 do not end up in Spam or Junk Mail folders.

If your agency already receives email printouts, no action is required.

Legacy Radio System Channels to be Removed from Field Radios

The Department of Public Safety is preparing to remove the old radio system from mobile and portable radios in the field, while performing some other upgrades to the radios. In the coming weeks, Department staff will be reaching out to individual agencies to schedule this programming. There is no need to reach out to MCDPS regarding this initiative. Once we are ready, we will contact all of the necessary users.

On the day of your re-programming appointment, please ensure that:

- The portable and mobile radios are easily accessible;
- All accessories (speaker mics, cases, etc.) are removed from the radios;
- The side programming/accessory port cover is removed from all portable radios; and,
- All portable radios batteries are charged.

Each portable radio will take approximately five (5) minutes to fully program and each mobile will take approximately 20 minutes. During programming, any favorites stored in the 'Favorites' bank of each radio will be cleared out and need to be re-programmed by your agency personnel (an instruction sheet will be provided to assist).

Thank you in advance for your flexibility and willingness to work with us on this project.

Windows 7 End-of-Life for MDCs Quickly Approaching

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.
Fire Academy to Offer Water Rescue Refresher Training

Are you trained to the Operations or Technician Level in Water Rescue? Has it been a while since you have actually used or practiced the skills you learned during your initial training? If you answered yes to these questions, the Montgomery County Fire Academy has two upcoming courses that may be of interest to you:

- Water Rescue Operations Level Refresher – Saturday, April 17th
- Water Rescue Technician Level Refresher – Sunday, April 18th

These 8-hour refresher courses build upon the skills learned in the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Water Rescue and Emergency Response and Advanced Line Systems Rescue courses. The programs include a brief dry-land review and plenty of in-water time to perfect skills and learn additional techniques not found in the Fish and Boat curriculum.

Students must bring a wet or dry suit (dry suit required for Technician Level Refresher), Type III or V USCG PFD with whistle and knife, water rescue helmet, river shoes or boots, two locking carabiners, throw bag, and gloves appropriate for water rescue use.

To enroll in either of these courses (or any courses offered by MCFA), fill out this registration form: [https://www.montcopa.org/DocumentCenter/View/26146/MCFA-Registration-2020](https://www.montcopa.org/DocumentCenter/View/26146/MCFA-Registration-2020).

For more information, contact Rob Carovillano, Rescue Training Coordinator, at rcarovillano@montcopa.org.

2021 Officer Updates Requested from Fire and EMS Agencies

The Department of Public Safety would like to remind any fire or EMS agency in Montgomery County that has not yet submitted an updated roster of operational officers for 2021 to please do so as soon as possible.

Agencies should compile one list containing the following information for each officer and email it to Fire & EMS Communications Manager Dennis Orangers at doranger@montcopa.org:

- Name
- Position (e.g., Deputy Chief, Lieutenant)
- Radio ID (e.g., DC1, LT2)
- Cell Phone
- Email
Fire Academy Class 2101 Continues Training

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-76bbf1a44b50. 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.

**COVID-19 Vaccines**

If you are a Montgomery County first responder (police, fire, or EMS), have not yet received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, and are interested in receiving it, please email Public Affairs Coordinator Todd Stieritz at tstierit@montcopa.org for additional information.