Two Lower Merion Firefighters Perish in the Line of Duty

On Sunday, July 4th at 10:34 PM, the Penn Wynne – Overbrook Hills Fire Company and mutual aid units were dispatched to a structure fire on the unit block of Rosedale Road in Lower Merion Township. Upon arrival, units found the structure heavily involved with fire and smoke. At approximately 11:02 PM, a mayday call was received. The Rapid Intervention Crew went into service and Firefighter Sean DeMuynck was located, unresponsive, on the third floor.

After being removed from the building by his fellow firefighters, Firefighter DeMuynck was transported to Lankenau Medical Center by Narberth Ambulance, arriving at approximately 11:37 PM. Sadly, attempts to resuscitate Firefighter DeMuynck were unsuccessful. He was pronounced dead on Monday, July 5, 2021 at 12:22 AM.

At 6:35 PM on July 5th, the Montgomery County Emergency Communications Center announced the Line of Duty Death of Firefighter DeMuynck over the 800 MHz radio system: https://youtu.be/rjU6sNXToOM.

Five days later, on Saturday, July 10th, a viewing and memorial service was held for Firefighter DeMuynck at Lower Merion High School, attended by hundreds of local firefighters, other first responders, and members of the public. At the close of the service, at approximately 12:02 PM, the Montgomery County Emergency Communications Center broadcast the last call for Firefighter DeMuynck: https://youtu.be/sQkVGwhV6kQ.

Firefighter DeMuynck faithfully served the citizens of Penn Wynne and Lower Merion Township as a volunteer firefighter since August 2019. He is survived by his wife and parents.

Less than three weeks after Firefighter DeMuynck lost his life, the Lower Merion Township Fire Department experienced yet another tragedy. On Saturday, July 24, 2021, at 3:04 AM, the Belmont Hills Fire Company and Gladwyne Fire Company were dispatched to a vehicle accident with injuries on Interstate 76 (Schuylkill Expressway) westbound at Mile Marker 335.0.

At approximately 3:23 AM, as units were preparing to leave the scene of the initial incident, an uninvolv...
Fire Company and one Pennsylvania State Police Trooper. Multiple EMS units were immediately requested to assist the injured first responders. After being struck by the vehicle, Firefighter Thomas Royds of the Belmont Hills Fire Company went into cardiac arrest and was transported by ambulance to Paoli Hospital. Sadly, Firefighter Royds succumbed to his injuries and passed away on Saturday, July 24th.

At 6:02 PM the following day, the Montgomery County Emergency Communications Center made the Line of Duty Death announcement for Firefighter Royds: https://youtu.be/tcUeQvLOWdI.

Firefighter Royds faithfully served the citizens of Lower Merion Township and Clifton Heights, Delaware County as a career and volunteer firefighter for over 30 years. He is survived by his children and siblings.

The staff of the Department of Public Safety extend our deepest condolences to the family and friends of Firefighter DeMuynck and Firefighter Royds, as well as to the members of the Penn Wynne – Overbrook Hills Fire Company, Belmont Hills Fire Company, Union Fire Association, Clifton Heights Fire Company, Lower Merion Fire Department, and the Lower Merion Professional Firefighters Association – Local 2844.

Firefighter Sean DeMuynck – Last Alarm: July 4, 2021
Firefighter Thomas Royds – Last Alarm: July 24, 2021

Firefighter Thomas Royds Funeral Arrangements

A viewing will be held for Firefighter Royds on Saturday, July 31st from 10:00 AM until 12:00 PM in the Lower Merion High School Auditorium, after which there will be a recessional and final salute. Any emergency services agencies interested in attending should contact Melissa Focht at mfocht@lowermerion.org. For more information, see the July 2021 Notices.

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Department of Public Safety Releases 2020 Annual Report

On Monday, July 26th, the Montgomery County Department of Public Safety published and released its 2020 Annual Report. The document is intended to provide partner agencies and community members with the opportunity to learn about the Department’s work and revisit some important activities and statistics from the past year.

“2020 will certainly be remembered as one of the most unique years in the history of Montgomery County DPS,” said Michael O. Vest, Director of the Department of Public Safety. “From the COVID-19 pandemic to the social unrest that occurred across the nation, 2020 certainly placed enormous demands on our Department. In the face of significant challenges, the members of this Department responded as they always do - rising to the occasion, adapting to constantly changing circumstances, and performing their duties with the highest levels of professionalism and respect.”


Department of Public Safety Personnel Changes

Derrell Buxton, Catherine Curia, Teresa Fiorenza, Emily French, Tina Hazelett (top row, left to right), Nicholas Markovich, Joseph McLaughlin, Diane Moultrie, Carlye Odorisco, Liam Ramsey (middle row, left to right), Kelly Walls, and Kimberli Wilson (bottom row, left to right) recently became the Department of Public Safety’s newest 9-1-1 telecommunicator trainees.

Over the next 8-12 weeks, the members of Class 101 will undergo rigorous classroom training in emergency calltaking and dispatch, before starting several more weeks of on-the-job training in the Emergency Communications Center. Congratulations and welcome to our newest employees!
Longtime Department of Public Safety Employee Retires

On Tuesday, July 6th, Radio System Engineer and Senior Technician Glenn Beard retired from the Department of Public Safety with more than 37 years of truly dedicated service to the citizens and first responders of Montgomery County. Glenn started with the Department in April of 1984, and since then has been instrumental in the design, installation, and upkeep of the County’s 9-1-1 communication systems.

When Glenn started, the County’s public safety radio communications system consisted of several hundred field radios operating on four police channels, two EMS channels, and four fire channels. There were only five radio towers, connected by phone lines. Since then, Glenn has helped create a state-of-the-art 800 MHz radio communications system with 30 tower sites connected by microwave technology, together supporting 56 channels and more than 12,000 field radios.

Glenn’s experience and dedication are unmatched, and he will be truly missed. Best wishes for a happy and healthy retirement, Glenn!

Law Enforcement and Fire Academy Fall Training Schedules Now Available

The Department of Public Safety’s Law Enforcement Division and Fire Academy recently released their training schedules for the Fall 2021 semester.

Law Enforcement

- Training Schedule: [https://www.montcopa.org/DocumentCenter/View/31689/2021-Fall-Training-Schedule](https://www.montcopa.org/DocumentCenter/View/31689/2021-Fall-Training-Schedule)
- Registration: Registration instructions for law enforcement courses vary by course can be found within the training schedule document.
- Contact: Janine Paul, Law Enforcement Training Coordinator, jpaul2@montcopa.org or (610) 278-3500

Fire Academy

- Training Schedule: [https://www.montcopa.org/1006/Training-Schedule](https://www.montcopa.org/1006/Training-Schedule)
- Contact: Cindy Myers, Fire Academy Registrar, cmyers@montcopa.org or (610) 278-3500
Firefighters Graduate from Entry Level Training

On Wednesday, July 21st, the Montgomery County Fire Academy held a virtual graduation ceremony for the 45 firefighters of Class 2101 to celebrate their completion of the Pennsylvania Entry Level Fire Fighter program. Because of the size of the class and pandemic restrictions, Class 2101 was split into two sections: Platoon A and Platoon B.

The Commencement Speaker was Derrick J.V. Sawyer, EFO, Chief of the Upper Darby Township Fire Department and former Fire Commissioner for the City of Philadelphia. Firefighter Eric Brown, Broomall Fire Company, and Firefighter Andrew Storti, Fairmount Engine Co. No. 2, received the award for the highest grade in the Interior Firefighter course. Congratulations and best wishes to the following graduates:

- Firefighter Edward Addis, Primos Secane Westbrook Park Fire Co.
- Firefighter Daniel Aglira, Middletown Fire Co.
- Firefighter Kurt Bittner, Flourtown Fire Co.
- Firefighter Eric Brown Jr, Broomall Fire Co.
- Firefighter James Callahan, Llanerch Fire Co.
- Firefighter Jason Campbell, Middletown Fire Co.
- Firefighter Francis Carola, Highland Park Fire Co.
- Firefighter Daniel Cramer Jr, Middletown Fire Co.
- Firefighter Kunga Dagpo, Belmont Hills Fire Co.
- Firefighter Samantha Deskiewicz, King of Prussia Fire Co.
- Firefighter James Dever, Fame Fire Co.
- Firefighter Nicholas DiDomenico, Garden City Fire Co.
- Firefighter Brendan Egan, Middletown Fire Co.
- Firefighter Thomas Feely, Middletown Fire Co.
- Firefighter Nicholas Gehman, Plymouth Fire Co.
- Firefighter Ezra Gilford, Broomall Fire Co.
- Firefighter Joseph Greenwald III, Trappe Fire Co.
- Firefighter Semeion Hall, Barren Hill Fire Co.
- Firefighter Jennifer Hinkley, Ringing Hill Fire Co.
- Firefighter James Katona III, Harmonville Fire Co.
- Firefighter Andrey Kolpakov, Fort Washington Fire Co.
- Firefighter Joe Magee Jr, Prospect Park Fire Dept.
- Firefighter Samuel McCauley, Royersford Fire Dept.
- Firefighter Daniel McKernan, Goshen Fire Co.
- Firefighter Phoenix Murray, Garden City Fire Co.
- Firefighter James Neusch, Skippack Fire Co.
- Firefighter Amy Paulson, Middletown Fire Co.
- Firefighter Darin Rapp, Fort Washington Fire Co.
- Firefighter Benjamin Reiner, Skippack Fire Co.
- Firefighter Brian Rivers, Wissahickon Fire Co.
- Firefighter Nicolai Robinson, Harmonville Fire Co.
- Firefighter Brett Sacks, Lower Frederick Fire Co.
- Firefighter Owen Schwerdtfeger, Broomall Fire Co.
- Firefighter Kevin Shrader, Conshohocken Fire Dept.
- Firefighter Zachary Steiger, Black Rock Vol. Fire Co.
- Firefighter Andrew Storti, Fairmount Engine Co. #2, Norristown Fire Dept.
- Firefighter Ethan Tartaglio, Berwyn Fire Co.
- Firefighter Maxwell Weiss, Wissahickon Fire Co.
- Firefighter Patrick Williams, Flourtown Fire Co.
- Firefighter David Young, Conshohocken Fire Dept.
Extensions Provided by State for Fire Certification Testing

The Pennsylvania Office of the State Fire Commissioner (OSFC) recently announced that extensions will be provided for many individuals whose fire training certification processes were interrupted or delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Due to the inability for their testing system to operate at normal capacity during the public health emergency, OSFC is enacting an interim policy to address the temporary suspension on their written and skills exam policies, which typically require certification testing to be completed within one (1) year of the date of the original test. Candidates whose initial expiration dates were between March 1, 2020 and December 31, 2020 will receive an extension until December 31, 2021 to complete both their written and skills testing.

For more information, see the Office of the State Fire Commissioner memo in the July Notices or contact Montgomery County Fire Academy Certification Coordinator Ed O’Hanlon at eohanlon@montcopa.org.

Next EDITS Date Announced

Last month, the Eastern Montgomery County Emergency Management Group and Montgomery County Department of Public Safety jointly announced the date for the next EDITS (Emergency Disaster Incident Training Symposium) conference, which will take place on Tuesday, October 4 and Wednesday, October 5, 2022. The conference will return to Normandy Farm Hotel & Conference Center in Whitpain Township, and registration will open this fall.

Please note that an EDITS Save-the-Date flyer tentatively advertising the next conference for May 2022 was distributed earlier this year. The month in which the conference will be held has been updated to October 2022 due to COVID-related delays.

Fire Police Equipment Available

The Department of Public Safety recently obtained grant funding for fire police equipment from the Southeastern Pennsylvania Regional Task Force. All Montgomery County fire companies and departments with an active fire police component are eligible to receive this equipment, which is being provided free of charge.

Any agency that has not yet picked up their equipment and has not made arrangements to do so is asked to contact Logistics Manager Jeremy Miles at jmiles@montcopa.org. The pickup location will be the Department of Public Safety warehouse (101 Brower Avenue, Unit 100, Oaks, PA 19460).

When picking up equipment, agencies should bring a vehicle capable of transporting (15) 28” traffic cones and one large box (approximately 4’ long), which contains diamond traffic signs with various attachments and safety vests.
Department of Public Safety Career Opportunities

The Department of Public Safety is currently hiring for several open positions. To read the full job descriptions and apply online, please visit www.montcopa.org/jobs and scroll down to Public Safety.

- **Communications Systems Specialist**
  The Communications Systems Specialist is primarily responsible for installing and troubleshooting mobile voice and data communications equipment in a Public Safety environment. He/she maintains broadband wireless mobile data equipment utilizing IP networks, public safety software applications such as Computer Aided Dispatching (CAD), Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL), and communications console equipment.

- **Deputy Director for Emergency Communications**
  The Deputy Director for Emergency Communications manages all 9-1-1 personnel and Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) operations on a daily basis. He or she must have the ability to analyze spreadsheets, financial projections, staffing needs, and related policies and procedures. He or she is able to effectively communicate one-on-one and in group settings with executives and officials of different departments, organizations, and regional government partners.

- **Emergency Preparedness Specialist (Chemical Safety Program)**
  The Emergency Preparedness Specialist (Chemical Safety Program) coordinates and implements the day-to-day operations of the Federal Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act of 1986 (SARA Title III, EPCRA) and the Pennsylvania Hazardous Material Emergency Planning and Response Act of 1990 (Act-165) for Montgomery County. Using these statutes, this position is responsible for ensuring compliance in both chemical quantity reporting and emergency planning. In addition, the position will ensure that usable plans are developed for and distributed to aid first responders for the facilities in question.

- **Radiological Planner – Part Time**
  The Radiological Planner is responsible for radiological emergency response planning and training. The position produces or reviews emergency plans for response to incidents at the Limerick Generating Station ("LGS"), and coordinates County, municipal, and school participation in associated drills. Other duties will include maintenance, calibration, and operational checks of radiological response equipment, to include decontamination equipment, radiological meters, and radiological dosimetry; training program review and creation; and training required to provide perform job tasks.

These positions require availability 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. These are Essential Employee positions. Essential employees are obligated to report to work as scheduled or remain at work during emergencies. Following is the Duty Statement for Essential Employees:

"Carries out essential job functions or assigned emergency duties which may involve assignments within the Emergency Operations Center, deployment to a field location to participate in emergency management activities, or other duties as required during periods of emergency. If received, emergency assignments may be performed under adverse conditions and continue for periods ranging from a few hours to several weeks."
Cradlepoint Modem Deployment Begins for Fire 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 and EMS agencies. While we continue to progress through EMS agencies, we are also now beginning to deploy new modems to fire agencies throughout Montgomery County. In order to receive the new modems, 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.

Radio Reprogramming Project Nears Halfway Mark

The Department of Public Safety has now reprogrammed approximately 50% of mobile and portable radios in the field, which includes the removal of old radio system channels. Department staff will be reaching out to the remaining agencies to schedule this programming in the near future.

There is no need to reach out to MCDPS regarding this initiative. Once we are ready for your agency, we will contact you. As a reminder, on the day of your re-programming appointment, please ensure:

- 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
- 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 will 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 the Department of Public Safety on this project.
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 pandemic. 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 EOCLogistics@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://www.montcopa.org/3744/COVID-19-Testing), 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.