John DiNolfi, Dispatcher #80, Retires from Montgomery County

Friday, February 4, 2022 marked the final day in a career spanning nearly four decades for John DiNolfi, Montgomery County Dispatcher #80. That morning, emergency vehicles from numerous fire, EMS, and police departments escorted John from his home to the Emergency Operations Center for his final day on the job. It will not come as a surprise to those who know John that he asked to drive Field Comm 3 back to its quarters one last time.

John started his career at the Department of Public Safety way back in 1984 and could be heard on the radio telling people where to go for more than 25 years. He was then promoted to Chief of Operations for the dispatch center, overseeing staffing, Field Comm deployments, and dispatch operations. In most recent position of Special Operations Coordinator, John managed the deployment of Department of Public Safety assets for both emergencies and planned events. There haven’t been many incidents in Montgomery County over the past 37.5 years that John hasn’t dispatched for, responded to, or assisted with in some way.

At 0907 hours, Dispatcher 80 signed off the radio for the last time: "8-0, signing off....at 0907 on February 4th. Take care." To view a video of the escort and listen to John’s radio sign-off, visit https://youtu.be/FNC-md2tkj0.

Happy retirement, John! Thank you for everything!

Fit Testing Machine Available for First Responder Agencies

As part of the Department of Public Safety’s Health and Safety Development program, police, fire, and EMS agencies are reminded of the availability of the Department’s quantitative fit testing machine. The device is capable of quantitative fit testing soft N-95 or similar respirators, as well as half- and full-face respirators. Quantitative fit testing can provide more accurate results than qualitative fit testing.

In addition, the device is capable of connecting with an agency-supplied laptop to help maintain automated fit-testing records and track respirator pass/fail status. For more information about the device’s capabilities, please visit: https://accutec.com/accufit-9000/. To borrow the device at no-cost, please contact Madison Sehn, Health and Safety Specialist, at msehn@montcopa.org for an orientation session.
HazMat Team Starts 2022 with Multiple Full Team Responses

The Montgomery County Hazardous Materials Response Team (HMRT) has had a busy start to the new year, particularly on Mondays and Wednesdays! To date in 2022, the team has had three Level II (full team) responses and four officer notifications (in-person or phone consultations). Thank you to the many first responders who assisted with the safe and successful mitigation of these incidents!

On Monday, January 10th, Station 81 officers provided recommendations over the phone regarding a vehicle accident and fire involving electrical wires and a transformer in Upper Merion Township. A week later, on Monday, January 17th, team officers assisted with three separate incidents, all before 10 AM: a home heating oil leak in Hatfield Borough (phone consultation), a diesel fuel spill in Telford Borough (response), and a No. 2 fuel oil spill in Pottstown Borough (phone consultation).

On Wednesday, January 26th, the HMRT was requested to respond to Upper Perkiomen High School in Red Hill Borough after a contractor improperly mixed chemicals, creating a vapor cloud and strong odor (above, right). HazMat technicians made entry to remove pressure from the vessel containing the chemicals by removing the lid, as well as to perform air monitoring and take pH readings of the mixture. HMRT officers then worked with the school district and pool service company to develop a plan for remediation.

One week later, on Wednesday, February 2nd, the team was called out to the Route 309 northbound offramp to Paper Mill Road in Springfield Township for a 55-gallon drum leaking a corrosive liquid (left). Technicians performed reconnaissance, identified the substance using specialized testing equipment, and then overpacked the drum to prevent any further leaking.

Two weeks to the day from the Springfield Township incident, on Wednesday, February 16th, the HMRT and Foam Task Force (FTF) were dispatched to assist with an incident on the eastbound PA Turnpike in Whitemarsh Township (right). A gasoline tanker truck was involved in an accident, overturned, and began leaking product, about a mile west of the Fort Washington Interchange.

HMRT and FTF units worked in coordination with local first responders to contain the product, suppress flammable vapors, conduct air monitoring for hazardous conditions, and oversee operations as an environmental contractor offloaded salvageable product from the tanker and cleaned up the roadway.
Over-The-Air Radio Programming Now Available

With the recent addition of over-the-air radio programming capabilities to Montgomery County’s public safety radio communications system, the following information may be useful for first responders and other system users:

- All Montgomery County portable and mobile radios can now be reprogrammed over-the-air.
- In order to receive any updates, technical staff at the Department of Public Safety will send an update to any applicable radio using the over-the-air programming method.
- The receiving radio must be turned on and tuned to a Montgomery County system talkgroup, which is any talkgroup that a field user can talk to the County on. Updates will not be received if the radio is tuned to a local talkgroup (e.g., Fireground, POS, etc.).
- The receiving radio will download the update in the background, which will not impact any normal radio operations, and will be invisible to the user.
- Once the update has finished downloading, the radio will chirp periodically, indicating that the download is complete.
- The receiving radio then needs to be turned off and turned back on, which is when the update will be applied (NOTE: the radio will be inoperable for about five minutes during this installation period).
- Any radio reprogramming or updating will reset the radio’s “Favorites” bank.

Cradlepoint Modem Deployment Continues for Fire Agencies

The Department of Public Safety has moved 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 575 modems to 88 first responder agencies. While we continue to progress through EMS, we are also now beginning to deploy new modems to fire companies and departments 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.
COVID-19 Vaccine Remains Available to First Responders by Request

As the demand for COVID-19 vaccines among first responders has decreased, the Department of Public Safety will be pausing regular vaccine clinics at the end of February 2022. If you are a Montgomery County first responder (EMS, law enforcement, firefighter, or emergency management official) who needs a COVID-19 vaccine (any dose), please fill out the following form and we will assist you: https://forms.office.com/r/psjSSsGfZe


Over 100 Attend the 19th Annual Command Officer Seminar

The Montgomery County Fire Academy hosted the 19th Annual Command Officer Seminar on February 5th, which was attended by over 100 fire chiefs and other senior officers from fire companies throughout the County.

Philadelphia Fire Department Deputy Chief Carl Randolph and Captain Ken Pagurek, both members of PA Task Force One, a FEMA-accredited Urban Search and Rescue Team, gave the main presentation on the challenges faced and lessons reinforced during the Task Force’s deployment to the Surfside Condo Collapse in Florida last year. Joel Schreiber of Miller Brothers Electric also provided an overview of the Battery Energy Storage Systems installed at the Philadelphia Navy Yard, the first of its kind in the region.

Those who attended also had a choice of four break-out sessions in the late morning and early afternoon covering Terrorism Awareness, Firefighter Highway Safety, Urban Water Rescue Considerations (right), and Firefighter Accountability. The Good Will Steam Fire Engine Company #1 of Pottstown Auxiliary prepared lunch for 135 attendees and presenters.

There were also displays of the County’s Emergency Management drones and HazMat Team equipment (left), as well as a presentation on the Emergency Responder Safety Institute's "Struck By Database".

Thank you to all of our attendees and presenters!
US&R Team Completes Rescue Triage Drill

On Wednesday, February 16th, the Montgomery Urban Search & Rescue (US&R) Team participated in a Rescue Triage Drill at the Public Safety Training Campus. The exercise was the culmination of several months of planning and integrated lessons learned from past drills and incidents. Rescue technicians were presented with the following scenario:

A natural gas explosion occurred in Upper Merion Township, and two neighboring 4-story reinforced concrete mixed-use buildings sustained significant structural damage. Both the fire and gas leak were placed under control, but an unknown number of occupants remained trapped and/or unaccounted for. The Incident Commander, Chief 56 of the Upper Merion Township Fire & EMS Department, requested the Montgomery County US&R Team to perform search and rescue operations in these two structures.

To make the scenario more realistic, the team brought in live actors to play the role of victims: five adults and three children, ages 8-15. The adults were able to provide feedback on the simulated medical care that was provided by rescue technicians, and the kids added stress and urgency by crying and yelling. Our team was in agreement after the exercise concluded that the actors each deserved to win an Oscar! Three rescue dummies were also used, bringing the total number of victims to 11.

Since the scenario was based on a real location in Upper Merion, CH56 agreed to participate and retain control of the simulated incident as the local AHJ (Authority Having Jurisdiction). This allowed the US&R Team to assume their proper place within the Incident Command System and practice reporting on operations back to the municipal Incident Commander, as they would do at a real incident. Thank you to all of our participants!

Emergency Management Staff Meet with FDNY Drone Pilots

On Friday, February 18th, four Division of Emergency Management staff traveled to New York City to meet with members of the FDNY’s Robotics/Command Tactical Unit.

Since we utilize some of the same equipment as our colleagues in the Big Apple, we discussed operational tactics, as well as policies and procedures that can be used to improve our UAS (Unmanned Aerial Systems) program here in Montgomery County.

Both teams had a great time flying each other's drones in a demo at FDNY's training academy. Thanks so much to our partners for the hospitality!
February Happenings

On Thursday, February 3rd, Department of Public Safety Emergency Communications and Emergency Management personnel and assets were deployed to Ambler Borough for several hours to assist with a multi-alarm building fire on S. Main Street.

Thanks so much to Alex Mann for returning to the EOC to present another session of his "Autism and the First Responder" training on February 7th! Alex provided essential tips on how to best interact with individuals who are on the spectrum. His focus was on 9-1-1 callers (for us) and inmates (for our neighbors at the Montgomery County Correctional Facility).

Please join us in congratulating Rob Carovillano, Rescue Programs Coordinator, and Eli Anselm, Emergency Preparedness Specialist, on receiving their Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency certifications earlier this month! Director Vest presented Rob with his Professional level certification and Eli with his Basic level. Great work, Rob and Eli!
New Pediatric Hospital Opens in Montgomery County

The Department of Public Safety is very excited to share that Montgomery County is now home to a new pediatric hospital and 24/7 emergency department!

On Wednesday, January 26th, the Middleman Family Pavilion of the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia opened its doors and the following morning, the first pediatric patient was transported to the hospital by Lower Providence EMS (pictured, left). The Department was notified by CHOP that the patient is doing well!

The new hospital, located in King of Prussia, will be an incredibly valuable resource for Montgomery County’s EMS providers, giving them an easy-to-access facility for specialty pediatric care. Many thanks to the EMS providers and hospital-based healthcare professionals of Montgomery County for the excellent work that they do every day!

Spring 2022 Law Enforcement Conference Registration Open

This spring, the Department of Public Safety will host a regional law enforcement conference at Normandy Farm Hotel & Conference Center (1401 Morris Road, Blue Bell, PA 19422). It is scheduled for Thursday, April 7, 2022, from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

The conference is for law enforcement professionals in Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia Counties. Utilizing funding from the Southeastern Pennsylvania Regional Task Force and in coordination with the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s Philadelphia Field Office, the agenda will feature multiple presentations on topics such as foreign and domestic terrorism, social media exploitation, the surge of violent crime and civil unrest, protecting critical infrastructure, cybersecurity, drug overdose surveillance, and intelligence sharing.

To register, visit https://bit.ly/2Xk8sSb or scan the QR code to the right. To view of a copy of the conference flyer, see the February Notices. Note that this conference is for law enforcement ONLY and registrants will be vetted before registration is confirmed.

Department of Public Safety Personnel Changes

Nicholas Stanek is the Department of Public Safety’s new Logistics Program Specialist. He attended Spring-Ford Area High School and graduated from Ramapo College of New Jersey, where he played four years of college basketball and earned a Business Administration degree, with a focus in management. Nicholas looks forward to getting to know everyone and working with them in the future!

nstanek@montcopa.org
Logistics Warehouse
Electronic Naloxone Request Form Now Available

Utilizing grant funding from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD), the Montgomery County Department of Public Safety distributes Narcan® (naloxone) nasal spray for use in response to opioid overdoses. First responders and other pre-approved organizations can receive Narcan® through this grant.

To request a supply of Narcan®, approved organizations can click on the link below or use the QR code to the right. After the Department of Public Safety approves or rejects the request, the requestor will receive an email.

Request Narcan® Here

Organizations not previously approved can contact the Department of Public Safety at (610) 631-6500 on weekdays between 8:00 AM and 4:00 PM to be considered for this program.

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-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://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.