State Trooper, Fire Chief Branden Sisca Killed in the Line of Duty

On Monday, March 21st, Pennsylvania State Police Trooper Branden T. Sisca was struck and killed in the line of duty by a driver on southbound Interstate 95 in Philadelphia. At the time of his passing, Trooper Sisca also served as the Chief of the Trappe Fire Company in Montgomery County. State Police Trooper Martin Mack and a pedestrian were also struck and killed.

According to a press release from the Office of Governor Tom Wolf, “the troopers were dispatched after receiving reports of a man walking on I-95 south. As they were helping him into the back of their cruiser, [a] female suspect attempted to drive past the scene. She fatally struck all three and the cruiser just before 1:00 a.m. and remained at the scene.”

Trooper/Chief Sisca leaves behind a wife and unborn child. Monetary donations to support his family can be made to the Montgomery County Hero Fund at the following webpage: https://montgomerycountyherofund.org/news-and-events/f/support-for-trooper-branden-siscas-family. The Hero Fund is a 501(c)(3) corporation and 100% of donations will go directly to the Sisca family.

There will be public viewings for Trooper/Chief Sisca on Friday, April 1st from 12:00 PM to 3:00 PM and from 5:00 PM to 9:00 PM at Boyd-Horrox-Givnish Funeral Home (200 W. Germantown Pike, Norristown, PA 19401). A public funeral service will be held on Saturday, April 2nd at 12:00 PM at Perkiomen Valley High School (509 Gravel Pike, Collegeville, PA 19426).

A document with instructions for first responders regarding the services can be found in the March Notices. The funeral procession following the public service and the interment will be private and not open to the public or media. Arrangements for Trooper Mack are available at https://www.media.pa.gov/Pages/PA-State-Police-Details.aspx?newsid=745.

The Department of Public Safety would like to extend its most sincere condolences to the members of the Trappe Fire Company and Pennsylvania State Police, as well as to the families and friends of the three men who tragically lost their lives on March 21, 2022.
Final Chance for Radio Reprogramming

As of March 2022, the Montgomery County Department of Public Safety has successfully reprogrammed over 99% of the approximately 8,000 public safety radios on our system. However, there are still a few radios that need to be updated. **For security reasons, on Monday, May 2, 2022, any radio that has not yet received the updated programming will be remotely disabled and inhibited from operating on the Montgomery County public safety radio system.**

Representatives from each of the affected agencies with any outstanding radios yet to be reprogrammed have been contacted directly by DPS staff informing them of such. After May 2nd, if a not-yet-updated radio is discovered by an agency, it can be brought to the EOC to be updated and re-enabled. With questions or to make arrangements for radio programming, please contact the DPS Radio Technical Services team at EOCTech@montcopa.org or (610) 631-6511.

US&R Team Recognized for Lifesaving Efforts During Ida

On Thursday, March 3rd, the approximate six-month anniversary of Hurricane Ida’s arrival in Montgomery County, the County Commissioners recognized the efforts of the Department of Public Safety's Urban Search & Rescue Team during the storm.

Working together in a coordinated effort over more than 18 hours in service, the following members of the team rescued and removed from harm’s way at least 54 human victims and 12 pets across 11 municipalities:

Joseph Dishler, **Task Force Leader**  
Donald Lynch, **Rescue Squad Officer**  
David Ellick, **Rescue Squad Officer**  
Thomas Hamel, **Rescue Squad Officer**  
Aaron Grewe, **Rescue Technician**  
Alexander Del Vecchio, **Rescue Technician**  
Richard "Andy" Eberz, **Rescue Technician**  
Brian Sarver, **Rescue Specialist**  
Bryce Dickinson, **Structure Specialist**  
Dean Seltzer, **Rescue Specialist**  
Jason Mirandi, **Rescue Specialist**  
John Mahon, **Rescue Specialist**  
Kevin Swan, **Rescue Specialist**  
Michael McMahon, **Rescue Specialist**  
Robert Carovillano, **Rescue Specialist**  
Ryan Overberger, **Medical Specialist**  
Thomas Brown, **Canine Spc., K-9 Memphis**

Congratulations to all and thank you for the great work!

Lower Merion’s Chief McGarvey Appointed as State Fire Commissioner

The Department of Public Safety would like to congratulate Charles “Chas” J. McGarvey, Sr. on his recent appointment by Governor Wolf to serve as the Pennsylvania State Fire Commissioner. Chas has served and protected the citizens of Montgomery County for more than four decades, first as a volunteer firefighter and later Chief of the Bryn Mawr Fire Company, and then as the Chief Fire Officer/Fire Marshal for Lower Merion Township. Best of luck, Commissioner McGarvey!
DPS to Celebrate National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week in April

"9-1-1, where is your emergency?" While every incoming call to the Montgomery County Department of Public Safety’s Emergency Communications Center starts the same way, it’s anyone’s guess where the conversation will go from there. Some calls are routine, others are rewarding, while still others are tragic. Our highly trained and skilled 9-1-1 Telecommunicators remain at the ready, 24/7/365, to provide life-saving assistance, regardless of the nature of the emergency.

During National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week, the second week of April, we’d like to take the opportunity to recognize our true first first-responders for the critical, and often under-appreciated, work that they do. On an average day, our 9-1-1 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 10th-16th (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. Thank you to our staff for your great work!

To learn more about National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week, visit npstw.org.
Department of Public Safety Creates First Responder Wellness Committee

The Department of Public Safety has convened a First Responder Wellness Committee in an effort to support Montgomery County first responders, public safety agencies, their employees, and volunteers in physical and mental wellness. The committee will utilize networking, idea-sharing, brainstorming, education, and programming to support workforce development and alleviate stress on the public safety community. First responders of all levels of certification and leadership are invited to join the committee, and external stakeholders in the mental and physical health realms will be encouraged to join as well.

The goal of this committee will be to create a sustainable and multidisciplinary group of first responders in varying levels of leadership with interest in sharing wellness programming, improving access to resources, exploring best practices, increasing educational opportunities, and building desired and progressive programming. Additionally, this group will support other resources available to first responders, such as the CISM team, while working to streamline processes, increase access to existing resources, and find solutions to fill any gaps that exist.

The committee held a successful first meeting on Thursday, March 24th, but we are still looking for additional dedicated public safety professionals who would like to have a voice in first responder wellness programming. We will continue to discuss current topics of mental health resources and gaps in Montgomery County and create several action items to progress forward. The next meeting is Thursday, April 28th at 10:00 AM.

If you are interested in joining the committee, being a core committee member, or nominating someone as a core member, please fill out this form https://forms.office.com/r/fksRW0Hunq. With questions or suggestions, please contact Health and Safety Specialist Madison Sehn at msehn@montcopa.org.

2022 EDITS “An Evening for Volunteers” Announced

This fall, the Eastern Montco Emergency Management Group and Montgomery County Department of Public Safety will again offer An Evening for Volunteers on the night before the EDITS conference begins. The event will take place on Monday, October 3rd from 6:30 to 9:30 PM at the Normandy Farm Hotel & Conference Center in Blue Bell. Topics and speakers will include:

- Surfside Condominium Collapse (near Miami, Florida)
  - Chief Ray Jadallah, Miami-Dade Fire Rescue
  - Chief Dave Downey, Deputy Coordinator, Florida Statewide Emergency Response Plan
- Morris City Lithium Battery Warehouse Fire
  - Chief Tracey Steffes, Morris City Fire Protection & Ambulance District

This event is offered at no cost to volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel within Montgomery County. The out-of-county registration fee is $15.00/person. For more information, see the flyer in the March Notices.

Preregistration is required, both for An Evening for Volunteers and for the full EDITS conference. Register for either event at https://www.emema.org/event/edits-2022/.
June 1st End of Life Approaching for Windows 7 and Sierra Wireless Modems

In order to maintain CJIS compliance, the Department of Public Safety previously blocked police departments and EMS agencies from using Windows 7 on MDCs. Fire agencies were given additional time to upgrade and replace equipment. Effective June 1, 2022, Windows 7 devices will no longer be allowed on the Montgomery County dispatch network, regardless of discipline.

Fire agencies still using Windows 7 must upgrade now, otherwise access will be lost starting June 1st. No exceptions will be made to this new deadline. For assistance, please send an email to DPSCADHelp@montcopa.org.

Additionally, the Department of Public Safety has been deploying new Cradlepoint modems and antennas to all police, fire, and EMS agencies. The old Sierra Wireless modems will no longer be supported or replaced as of June 1, 2022. If you have new Cradlepoint modems that are not yet installed, please get them installed as soon as possible. If you still need to obtain your new hardware, please send an email to DPSCADHelp@montcopa.org with:

- 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

These new modems and antennas are provided free of charge in a 1-for-1 swap. All agencies with Sierra modems are required to switch over to new Cradlepoint modems. Agencies are responsible for installation charges and carrier data plans.

Next Generation of Firefighters Begins Training

On Saturday, March 26th, the twenty-five members of Montgomery County Fire Academy Class 2202 completed Introduction to the Fire Service, the first of four courses required for Pennsylvania entry-level firefighter training. The topics covered in this course include the history of the fire service, fire service organization, firefighter safety, highway scene safety, and personal protective equipment. The students also have an opportunity to test for national certification in Hazardous Materials Awareness.

Over the next several months, the members of Class 2202 will have to complete an additional 160+ hours of classroom and hands-on training, as well as successfully pass certification testing.

Interested in furthering your fire service career? Visit https://www.montcopa.org/1006/Training-Schedule to learn about all of our upcoming training opportunities, including newly announced offerings of Introduction to the Fire Service (starts April 30th) and Fire Ground Support (starts May 16th).
Accelerated, Blended EMT Training Program Starts This Summer

Are you looking to change careers and help save lives? If so, become certified as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) through the Department of Public Safety - EMS Training Institute’s accelerated summer program!

The blended course runs from June 6 until August 5, 2022, and meets every week Monday through Thursday, 9 AM to 4 PM. The three in-person sessions each week will be held at the Public Safety Training Campus, located at 1175 Conshohocken Road, Conshohocken, PA 19428. Internet access and a laptop or tablet are required for virtual sessions.

Register online at http://emstrainingcenter.org before May 16th. Don't miss out on this opportunity!

Public Safety Training Campus Hosts MIRT Training

On Wednesday, March 24, 2022, 63 members of the Montgomery County Police Major Incident Response Team (MIRT) participated in quarterly training at the Public Safety Training Campus. This full day of training covered the use of gas masks, annual fit-testing, and a review of crowd control tactics. The 63 personnel that attended represented 21 Montgomery County law enforcement agencies and the Plymouth Community Ambulance Association.

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.
Department of Public Safety Personnel Changes

**Amanda Brady** was recently promoted to the position of Training and Preparedness Coordinator within the Department of Public Safety’s Emergency Management Division. Amanda has served as a 9-1-1 Telecommunicator since 2010, answering 9-1-1 calls, dispatching police, and training new hires as a Communications Training Officer. Amanda was the recipient of the Emergency Communications Division’s staff award for Employee of the Year in 2020. She has a Bachelor’s degree in Criminal Justice and Sociology from Arcadia University, and is currently studying for her Master’s Degree in Emergency Services Management from Columbia Southern University. Amanda also serves as the Administrator of the Montgomery County Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Team.

abrady@montcopa.org
(610) 631-6517
Emergency Operations Center

**Karin Derstine, Zach Fee, and Allei Scott** (below, 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 103 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!

Law Enforcement Conference Registration Closing Soon

In early April, the Department of Public Safety is hosting 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](https://bit.ly/2Xk8sSb). To view a copy of the conference flyer, see the March Notices. Note that this conference is for law enforcement ONLY.
COVID-19 Vaccine Remains Available to Responders by Request

As the demand for COVID-19 vaccines among first responders has decreased, the Department of Public Safety paused 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


DPS Provides Special Ops Demonstration for Montgomery Twp.

On Tuesday, March 22nd, representatives from the Department of Public Safety’s Hazardous Materials Response Team and Urban Search & Rescue Team spent time networking with Montgomeryville-area first responders.

Special Operations staff demonstrated each team’s assets and capabilities for the members of the Fire Department of Montgomery Township and other regional first responder agencies. By meeting and answering questions ahead of time, we’re better prepared to respond to the next emergency.

Agencies interested in setting up a special operations demonstration or learning more about the services that the Department of Public Safety offers may contact Assistant Director for Emergency Management Operations Bill Messerschmidt at wmessers@montcopa.org.

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.
Montgomery County to Host Career Fair on April 6th

On Wednesday, April 6th from 2 PM to 7 PM, Montgomery County is hosting a career fair at the Montgomery County Community College Health Sciences Center Main Gymnasium, located at 340 Dekalb Pike, Blue Bell, PA 19422. People searching for full time, part time, or internship positions are encouraged to attend.

In addition to the Department of Public Safety, representatives from the following County departments, offices, and agencies will be in attendance:

- Department of Assets and Infrastructure
- Coroner’s Office
- Correctional Facility
- Office of the District Attorney
- Health and Human Services
- Information Technology
- Planning Commission
- Pre-Trial Services
- Prothonotary
- Sheriff’s Office
- Office of the Public Defender
- Office of Voter Services
- Youth Center

Department of Public Safety staff will provide information on current openings, as well as the upcoming next round of hiring for 9-1-1 Telecommunicators. For more information on the career fair, visit www.montcopa.org/careerfair.