



Public Safety News

Montgomery County Department of Public Safety

OCTOBER 30, 2020

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Department of Public Safety

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Radio System Cutover Scheduled

Department of Public Safety staff, in consultation with Motorola representatives, are planning for a cut-over to the new 800 MHz radio system on Tuesday, December 8, 2020. More information, including specific instructions for field users on cut-over day, will be forthcoming via Everbridge, email, and radio committees.

IMPORTANT – APX 4000/4500 users: As Motorola APX 4000 portables and APX 4500 mobiles only have the capacity to operate on one system (currently the “old” or existing system), each of these radios will have to be reprogrammed by Department of Public Safety staff prior to December 8th so that they can be used on the new system.

The original plan for 4000/4500 users was to divide an agency’s radios in half, reprogramming one half of radios for use on the new system just before December 8th and the other half just after the cut-over, allowing the agency uninterrupted use of radio communications throughout the transition (albeit with a reduced supply of radios for a period of a few days).

However, the Department of Public Safety recently secured grant funding to purchase upgrades for all 4000 and 4500 series radios. This feature will allow them, like radios in the 6000/6500 series, to be programmed with both the old and new radio system frequencies, eliminating the need for any radios to be unusable during the transition period. An added benefit of this upgrade is that it will allow for contactless radio programming in the future.

Department of Public Safety staff will need to physically install the upgrade on all 1,800 APX 4000 and 4500 radios currently in service across Montgomery County. Any agency using these radios will be contacted by a Department of Public Safety representative in the coming weeks to schedule a reprogramming appointment.

All APX 6000 and 6500 radios have already been programmed with both systems and do not need to be reprogrammed prior to the cut-over date.

Agencies with questions may email EOCTech@montcopa.org or call (610) 631-6511.

Colmar Firefighter Dies in the Line of Duty

On Thursday, October 1st, Colmar Fire Police Captain Edward “Gary” Minnick tragically died in the line of duty. Gary served for over 18 years with the Colmar Volunteer Fire Company, holding many positions within the organization. He had over 30 years of fire service experience at the time of his passing.

Director Sullivan and the members of the Department of Public Safety send their deepest condolences to the men and women of Station 12, as well as Gary’s friends and family.

Image courtesy of Chief Andrew Backlund, Colmar Fire Company.



9-1-1 Telecommunicator and Trainee of the Year Announced

On Wednesday, September 30th, two Department of Public Safety telecommunicators were presented with awards for outstanding achievement. Nominated by their peers, Amanda Rosentreter (**below, left**) was recognized as the 2019 Telecommunicator of the Year, while Jennifer Benson (**below, right**) was named the 2019 Telecommunicator Trainee of the Year. Congratulations to both Amanda and Jennifer!



Amanda was described by her coworkers who nominated her as "helpful, friendly...courteous" and "extremely positive." She is "a model employee...confident in her work...knowledgeable and eager to help others" and is a "breath of fresh air."

Jennifer's colleagues described her as "friendly, professional...always willing to help others," "awesome and great." She "gets along well with others, is a team player" and "is a quick learner."

While these awards are typically presented for the previous year during National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week in mid-April, the decision was made to delay until the end of September due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Editor's Note: The Department of Public Safety employees pictured here briefly removed their masks for the award presentation and photographs.

Local Business Recognized for Continued Support of DPS

On Wednesday, September 30th, Department of Public Safety staff presented owners Patrizia and Steve of Collegeville Italian Bakery Pizzeria Napoletana with a commemorative plaque in recognition of all that they do to support both the Emergency Communications Division and the Department as a whole. It reads:

*"To the
Collegeville Bakery
In recognition for
your support and generosity
of the
Public Safety Community.*

*We are truly grateful and offer our
heartfelt THANKS!*

*From the
Telecommunicators of Montgomery
County
Emergency Communications Division."*



Thanks so much to Patrizia, Steve, and the entire Collegeville Bakery team for everything you do!



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DPS Chief Medical Officer Receives Statewide EMS Award

On Tuesday October 13th, Department of Public Safety Chief Medical Officer and Montgomery County Regional EMS Medical Director Dr. Alvin Wang (**below, center**) was presented with the David J. Lindstrom EMS Innovation Award at the 43rd annual Pennsylvania Emergency Medical Services Conference, held virtually.

Alvin was recognized for numerous efforts, including his work with the County and State Medical Advisory Committees to develop and implement pilot treatment programs over the past few years and for his invaluable assistance to Montgomery County during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Weeks before the first positive test results were announced in Pennsylvania, Dr. Wang worked to implement Acute Febrile Respiratory Illness and travel-related screening questions for 9-1-1 callers in Montgomery County, and was directly responsible for early testing of first responders that were known to be exposed at the beginning of the pandemic.



He later assisted in the development of a first responder exposure self-reporting form to assist police, fire, and EMS personnel with quarantine, testing, and isolation, and worked with the Office of Public Health, County Commissioners, and Department of Public Safety to plan, deploy, and operate the community based COVID-19 testing sites across the County.

Dr. Wang's leadership in data collection and analysis throughout the pandemic has provided valuable information for senior officials about viral spread and contact tracing among both first responders and the general public.

Alvin has significantly elevated the profile of prehospital medicine both in Montgomery County and throughout southeastern Pennsylvania during these unprecedented times. We are so lucky to have him as a part of our team! Congratulations, Alvin!

Manpower Tracking for Fire Apparatus Now Available

Effective Thursday, October 8th, the Montgomery County Emergency Communications Center now has the ability to formally track fire apparatus staffing in the CAD system.

Any time that an apparatus goes enroute and announces staffing (e.g., "County, Engine 1 responding with 4"), fire dispatchers will be able to record this and report back to the Incident Commander or Officer in Charge when requested.

As a refresher, fire officers are asked to review the *Montgomery County Response Staffing Number Standard*, a recommended practice established jointly by the Montgomery County Fire Chiefs' Association and the Montgomery County Municipal Fire Officers' Association. The standard is attached in the October Notices and is also available at <http://mcfirechiefs.org/standards/>.



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Emergency Communications Continues to Provide AFRI Alerts

In order to protect first responders in Montgomery County, Emergency Communications Center staff continue to provide timely notifications to the field whenever there is a known elevated risk of COVID-19 exposure on an incident.

When a 9-1-1 or 10-digit caller indicates that he or she, or another individual on location exhibits symptoms of, or has been tested for, COVID-19, the calltaker will enter "AFRI" in the notes and the dispatcher will voice it to responding units via radio.

The acronym AFRI, which stands for Acute Febrile Respiratory Illness, is utilized when the caller answered "yes" to one or both of the following questions:

- Is the patient or those in close contact with the patient such as household members exhibiting any flu-like symptoms such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath?
- Has the patient or anyone in the household been tested for COVID-19?

In addition, Department of Public Safety staff receive a copy of the daily report of positive test results and enter remarks in CAD for the residences of those on the list. The CAD remark "+CONFIRMED AFRI LOCATION" indicates that a resident at the location or household has tested positive for COVID-19, while "+CONFIRMED AFRI COMPLEX" means that an individual within that complex (e.g., apartment building, Long Term Care facility, etc.) has tested positive.

Dispatchers will then voice via radio when one of these remarks is displayed in CAD. The confirmed positive test result AFRI remarks remain in CAD for 30 days after the initial entry, unless contact tracing investigations provide a reason to remove the remarks (e.g., college student living on campus outside of Montgomery County used parents' address when registering for testing).

Responders should be cautioned that the lack of an AFRI note or remark on a call does not guarantee a COVID-free environment and does not indicate that responders should interact with anyone on location without proper PPE. Instead, a standard level of precaution should be exercised at all calls for service during the COVID-19 pandemic, with elevated procedures enacted when an AFRI notification is made by the dispatcher.

Local Firefighters Receive Award of Valor

On October 1st, Firehouse Magazine announced the recipients of the 2019 Michael O. McNamee Awards of Valor, which recognize "acts of courage and bravery, including both physical acts to rescue a victim in hazardous conditions as well as critical decisions or preventative actions that ensured civilian or firefighter safety."

Two of the honorees were Lower Providence Fire Department Battalion Chief Christopher J. Reynolds and Lieutenant Michael C. Rohlfing, who were recognized for their efforts to rescue a lost firefighter during the January 26, 2019 fire at Salters Ski Shop in Lower Providence Township.

For more information about the award and a complete listing of 2019 recipients, visit <https://www.firehouse.com/valor-awards/document/21154876/2019-valor-community-service-awards> and click on the red Download box.



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October Operations

PPE Distribution

On Wednesday, October 7th, Department of Public Safety staff worked with our partners at the Montgomery County Commerce Department, the Montgomery County Office of Public Health, and the Montgomery County Early Learning Resource Center to issue nearly 1,300 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits from our warehouse in Upper Providence Township. Nearly 100 kits were distributed to daycares, while approximately 1,200 kits were distributed to local Chambers of Commerce, who will in turn issue them to both member and non-member

businesses in their coverage areas. The kits include face masks, face shields, sanitizer, a thermometer, and other crucial COVID-19 mitigation and protection equipment along, with #MaskUpMontco window clings and documents that provide COVID-19 information and guidance. Funding for this project was provided by the CARES Act.



Election Planning Meeting

That same day, the Department of Public Safety hosted a multiagency planning meeting for the upcoming general election. Participating organizations included the FBI and PSP, as well as the Montgomery County Commissioners' Office, District Attorney's Office, Detectives Bureau, Sheriff's Office, and Police Chiefs' Association. Representatives met to discuss coordination operations leading up to, on, and after Election Day.



Hazardous Materials Incident

The following afternoon, the Department of Public Safety assisted at a large junkyard fire on the 500 block of Flint Hill Road in Upper Merion Township. Deployed county units and teams included the Tactical Communications Team, Field Comm 3, Field Comm 1, the Hazardous Materials Response Team, the Foam Task Force, on-call emergency management staff, and the UAV (unmanned aerial vehicle).



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Deadline for Radio Purchases Quickly Approaching

As a reminder, Motorola XTS/XTL radios WILL NOT work on the new radio system. All user radios must be the newer style Motorola APX series. If your agency has not yet purchased or procured APX radios, you must do so as soon as possible to ensure you will be able to operate on the new radio system. To purchase radios, contact Motorola Sales Representative Paul Murray at (973) 222-9422 or paul.murray@motorolasolutions.com.



Motorola Portable Radio Battery Reminder

Motorola has notified the Department of Public Safety of an update that pertains to any agency that is purchasing UL (White Dot) batteries. These batteries, often referred to as "intrinsically safe," are replacing the FM (Green Dot) batteries. The new UL 3100mAh battery for the APX 6000 portable is slightly thicker, does not fit in the hard-plastic holsters, and may not fit in the leather holsters.

In addition, APX 6000 radios may require a firmware update when new IMPRES 2 batteries are purchased if the radio displays LOW BATTERY after being charged. With any questions, contact Motorola Sales Representative Paul Murray at (973) 222-9422 or paul.murray@motorolasolutions.com.

For more information, see the October 2020 Notices.



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Department of Public Safety Personnel Changes

Gus Petrogiannis, Keeghan Hendricks, Haley Marrone, Mary Kate McGuire, Jennifer McMonagle (top row, left to right), **Saige Osterhout, Colleen Rupp, Lisa Sinkiewicz, and Matt Webster** (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 99 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!



Career Opportunity

The Department of Public Safety is currently accepting applications for the position of Health & Safety Specialist within the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Division. Some of the primary responsibilities will include:

- Provides real-time first responder exposure tracking, risk analysis, and health monitoring using the CDC/NIOSH Emergency Responder Health Monitoring System or other similar system.
- Monitors calls with high exposure potential and performs immediate exposure tracking and responder risk potential assessment.
- Provides rapid decontamination/disinfection after high acuity incidents and minimizes crew exposure through rapid response actions.
- Responds as a Health and Safety Liaison to the Incident Commander during large scale or complex public safety incidents to provide contamination consultation.
- Serves as the MCDPS Health & Safety Officer, ensuring that personnel are following appropriate guidance and SOPs.

This is a full-time position that is grant funded through August 31, 2021, with extensions based on funding availability. This position requires on call responsibilities and also may require long hours in high stress situations staffing the Emergency Operations Center, or in the field, during emergencies and unusual events.

For a complete job description and to apply online, visit <https://www.montcopa.org/Jobs.aspx?UniqueId=102&From=All&CommunityJobs=False&JobID=Health-Safety-Specialist-1036>.



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DPS Launches Pre-Hospital Antibiotics Pilot Program

The Department of Public Safety's EMS (Emergency Medical Services) Division, in collaboration with local EMS agencies and area hospitals, will participate in a statewide pilot to test the effectiveness of antibiotics administered in the pre-hospital setting.

Current studies show that rates of infection as low as 7% can be achieved when antibiotics are administered in the first 60 minutes following a traumatic injury. Risk then increases as time to antibiotic delivery is delayed. The ultimate goal is to reduce soft tissue and bone infections associated with open fractures by providing antibiotics closer to the time of injury.

In order to participate, EMS agency medical directors were required to submit letters of interest, which were then vetted and ultimately approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Health - Bureau of EMS. After receiving training, paramedics working for approved pilot program agencies can administer the antibiotic Cefazolin to patients that suffer an open fracture as a result of a traumatic event.



The approved Montgomery County EMS agencies for the pilot program are:

- Narberth Ambulance
- Whitemarsh Ambulance
- Lower Providence Community Center Ambulance
- Skippack Emergency Medical Services
- Harleysville Area Emergency Medical Services
- Volunteer Medical Service Corps of Lansdale
- Community Ambulance Association of Ambler
- Horsham Fire Company Ambulance
- Upper Merion Township Fire & EMS
- Upper Perkiomen Valley Ambulance
- Second Alarmers Rescue Squad

To measure success, EMS agencies will be required to submit monthly data reports to the Department of Public Safety - EMS Division, which will be carefully reviewed both at the local and state level.

Chief Medical Officer and Montgomery County Regional EMS Medical Director Dr. Alvin Wang proposed that the initial doses of Cefazolin and subsequent supplies be provided to the participating agencies. On October 19, 2020, DPS staff distributed pre-packaged kits, which each include one dose of Cefazolin, administrative supplies, and a colored wrist band.

The colored wrist band was an innovative idea developed by Dr. Wang to identify that the patient has received a dose of Cefazolin and to provide a place for an EMS provider to document the exact time of administration. The receiving facility staff will then utilize this information to note that the patient has received antibiotics in the field.

Local hospitals have agreed to participate in the restocking program after an EMS agency has demonstrated use of the antibiotic. This will enable EMS units to restock Cefazolin on a 1-for-1 basis prior to departing the hospital. EMS agencies may begin to administer Cefazolin to patients that meet the criteria in early November 2020.



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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.



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