US&R Team Keeps Skills Sharp with February Trainings

On February 15th, the Montgomery County Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) Team participated in a winter weather-based rescue drill, despite the unexpectedly warm temperatures. In the scenario, the driver of a 4-door passenger vehicle pulled into a strip mall to get coffee but, due to the snow-covered parking lot, lost control and drove into the storefront entrance doors.

The local fire department arrived to find the car on its side, halfway into the store. Firefighters began to move debris to gain access to the occupants when suddenly the store’s front awning and stone facade fell, trapping additional people. Smoke began to push from the storefront as patrons exited from the store’s side doors. Witnesses told responders that part of the roof collapsed, trapping at least one person.

US&R arrived with three squads, completed an interior and exterior size-up, and began to implement the devised rescue plan. Rescue technicians utilized shoring to stabilize the structure and mitigate further collapse, placed shoring to prevent further movement from the vehicle, and deployed rigging systems to move concrete slabs and the vehicle off the simulated victims. Crews successfully rescued three simulated victims in under 40 minutes.

Four days later, on February 19th, the US&R team headed to the Delaware River to brush up on their emergency boat operations skills in aquatic conditions that are difficult to simulate locally in Montgomery County on a blue sky day. The portion of the Delaware that the team utilizes for these drills features underwater obstructions on the New Jersey side that help produce conditions often seen during urban flooding but in a more predictable and consistent setting.

During a flooding event like Hurricane Ida, subsurface obstructions lead to ever-changing water conditions, challenging rescuers to navigate skillfully in the unknown environment. Rescue boat operators must account for varying flow rates, water depths, and hazardous underwater obstructions such as cars, fences, and utility poles. Just one miscalculation could lead to the loss of a rescuer or victim’s life, significant injury, or damage to equipment.
MCDPS Congratulates Ken Hellendall on Retirement from Cheltenham EMS

The Department of Public Safety would like to congratulate Ken Hellendall on his recent retirement as Director of Cheltenham Township EMS and thank him for his dedication to the emergency services in Montgomery County.

For decades, Ken has been an instrumental member of the Montgomery County Ambulance Association and Eastern Montgomery County Emergency Management Group, assisting with the planning and execution of numerous EDITS Conferences.

Despite stepping away from his fulltime role in EMS, Ken plans to continue to serve his community as the Cheltenham Township Emergency Management Coordinator and as a volunteer firefighter with the LaMott Fire Company.

Thank you, Ken! Have a safe, happy, and healthy retirement!

Bill Messerschmidt Appointed as Director of Chester County DES

The Department of Public Safety would like to congratulate Bill Messerschmidt on his recent appointment as Director of the Chester County Department of Emergency Services. In his 10+ years with DPS, Billy served as a Radiological Planner, Technological Hazards Planning Specialist, and, most recently, as Assistant Director for Emergency Management Operations. Best of luck in your new role and thank you for everything that you’ve done for the Department of Public Safety!

Save the Date: Montgomery County Hero Fund Fundraiser

While a flyer is not yet available, the Montgomery County Hero Fund has selected a date for their second annual 5k Race, Beer Festival, and BBQ Competition. The event will take place on Saturday, September 30, 2023 (Rain date: Sunday, October 1, 2023). More details will be included in future editions of PSN when available.

To learn more about the Montgomery County Hero Fund or to donate, visit https://montgomerycountyherofund.org/.
DPS Technology Division Provides Updates for Fire and EMS Agencies

**Updated Bucks County Programming for Bordering Fire/EMS Agencies**

The Department of Public Safety has updated the Bucks County radio programming that is currently installed in all Montgomery County fire and EMS radios owned by agencies situated near the Bucks County border. In the coming weeks and months, the Department’s Technology Division staff will be reaching out to those agencies to schedule in-person reprogramming of all radios, in order to incorporate this updated programming. Technicians will also be upgrading the firmware in each radio during this reprogramming effort.

**Reminder About Cradlepoint Modem Installations for Fire Companies**

Over the past several years, the Department of Public Safety’s Technology Division staff have issued new Cradlepoint modems to replace the old Sierra wireless modems in Montgomery County fire company vehicles. To date, hundreds of these new Cradlepoint modems have been installed. However, there are about 80 modems that have been issued to various fire agencies that are not yet installed.

The Department of Public Safety is requesting that these agencies get the Cradlepoint modems installed as soon as possible or, if they are no longer needed, return the modems to DPS so other agencies can utilize them. DPS staff will be reaching out to the agencies with uninstalled modems in the coming weeks.

**Fire Academy in Need of Wooden Pallets for Spring Training**

The Montgomery County Fire Academy is in need of wooden pallets for the upcoming burn season. The pallets should be standard size (approximately 4’x4’’) and free and clean of any paints or oil. It is preferred that they be dropped off at the Fire Academy, but arrangements can be made to pick them up if needed. Please contact Marty Joyce at Martin.Joyce@montgomerycountypa.gov or (215) 436-5100 if you or someone you know is able to donate these valuable training supplies.

**2023 Law Enforcement Training Schedule Now Available**

The Department of Public Safety’s 2023 Law Enforcement Training Schedule is now available online: https://www.montcopa.org/DocumentCenter/View/38031/2023Spring-Training-Schedule. The document is also attached in the February Notices. Courses include:

- EVOC for SUVs
- Basic Police Motorcycle Operator Training
- DVIT Defensive Driving: Cars
- DVIT Defensive Driving: Trucks

For additional information, contact Law Enforcement Training Coordinator Janine Paul at Janine.Paul@montgomerycountypa.gov.
Emergency Management Professionals Visit County EOC

On February 15th, more than 60 municipal partners attended the Department of Public Safety’s monthly emergency management training and meeting at the Emergency Operations Center. February’s topic was a discussion and interactive display of various Department of Public Safety assets and vehicles. Thanks to everyone who attended!

Fire Academy Announces Change to Firefighter I Age Policy

On November 3, 2022, Governor Tom Wolf signed Act 155 of 2022 into law, amending the PA Child Labor Act. Previously, firefighters under the age of 18 were not permitted to “enter a burning structure under any circumstance [including a training exercise].” With the new law, an exception was added to this provision:

“except when engaged in a training session for an interior firefighting module with live burns and all of the following apply:

(i) The minor is 17 years of age or older.

(ii) The minor has permission to engage in the training from a fire chief and a parent or guardian of the minor.

(iii) The minor is under the supervision of a credentialed Pennsylvania State Fire Academy instructor.”

In accordance with this change in state law, the Montgomery County Fire Academy has enacted two policy changes, effective immediately:

1) The minimum age to register for Introduction to the Fire Service has been reduced from 17 to 16. Thus, junior firefighters aged 16 or older may now begin the PA Entry Level Training Program.

2) The minimum age to register for Interior Firefighter has been reduced from 18 to 17, as long as parent/guardian AND fire chief consent is received. The parent/guardian and fire chief consent forms will be required at time of registration. Without proper consent forms, the minimum age will remain at 18.

The PA Entry Level Firefighter program includes four modules: Introduction to the Fire Service, Fire Ground Support, Exterior Firefighter, and Interior Firefighter. To view the Fire Academy’s Spring 2023 training schedule and register for classes, visit https://www.montcopa.org/1006/Training-Schedule.

The consent forms are currently pending from the Pennsylvania State Fire Academy and should be available in the near future. When available, they will be posted to the Montgomery County Fire Academy’s website.

Did You Know?

9-1-1 in the United States turns 55 years old this month! The first 9-1-1 call was placed on February 16, 1968 by Senator Rankin Fite in Haleyville, Alabama.
Changes Implemented in Montgomery County Email Addresses

Montgomery County is in the process of making two significant changes to all employee email addresses:

- Instead of starting with the employee’s first initial and then either the first seven letters of their last name or full last name (depending on when the employee started with the County), new emails will utilize the following naming convention: `firstname.lastname`
- Instead of ending with @montcopa.org, emails will end with @montgomerycountypa.gov

When changes are implemented in each County department, the new format will look like this: `firstname.lastname@montgomerycountypa.gov`. The Department of Public Safety was transitioned on Friday, December 16th, so please utilize these new email addresses to contact Department staff. However, the old @montcopa.org emails will still be able to receive incoming messages for the foreseeable future.

Fire Academy Adds Officer I to the Spring Schedule

Last month, the Montgomery County Fire Academy added Fire Officer I to its training schedule for the Spring 2023 semester. Students who successfully complete the class and pass written and skills testing will receive the IFSAC-Pro Board Fire Officer I certification. The class will meet on the following days:

- Saturday, March 11th, 8:15am
- Wednesday, March 15th, 6:45pm
- Saturday, March 18th, 8:15am
- Wednesday, March 22nd, 6:45pm
- Saturday, March 25th, 8:15am
- Saturday, April 8th, 8:15am
- Wednesday, April 12th, 6:45pm

Prerequisites include: Firefighter II certification, Hazardous Materials Operations or refresher dated within one year of the test date, ICS (16 hours) or IS 100 and 200, and Instructor I certification. To register, visit https://www.montcopa.org/1006/Training-Schedule.

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. After the Department of Public Safety approves or rejects the request, the requestor will receive an email.

Request Narcan® Here
Department of Public Safety Career Opportunities

The Department of Public Safety is seeking qualified applicants for the following vacancies. For more information about the roles or to apply online, visit [www.montcopa.org/jobs](http://www.montcopa.org/jobs) or click on the links below.

- **The EMS Training Assistant** is responsible for coordinating training resources; scheduling and teaching both credential-producing as well as continuing education for Paramedics, AEMT, EMTs, EMRs, and laypersons from the community. Duties include assisting in completing required paperwork and filing with the PA Department of Health, Bureau of EMS to ensure compliance with all PA DOH Educational SOP requirements; coordinating and taking an active role in Quality Improvement and Quality Assurance programs; and overseeing the Field Training Program.

- **The Fiscal Grant Manager** will assist with the financial administration of the Homeland Security Grant agreements for the six member counties of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Regional Task Force, to ensure financial accountability and fiduciary reimbursement. This position is a point of contact with various agencies in PEMA, Grants Management.

- **The Logistics Program Manager** will be responsible for the day-to-day logistics of the Montgomery County Department of Public Safety and Office of Public Health field response. He or she will manage, inventory, maintain, and distribute deployable assets, personal protection equipment (PPE), testing supplies, and equipment in an efficient manner. As operations expand, this position will also be responsible for overseeing the logistics and supply chain management for the Department of Public Safety and other emergency assets in Montgomery County.

- **The Logistics Program Specialist** will assist with the day-to-day logistics of the Montgomery County Department of Public Safety and Office of Public Health field response. He or she will manage, inventory, maintain, and distribute deployable assets, personal protection equipment (PPE), testing supplies, and equipment in an efficient manner. As operations expand, this position will also be responsible for assisting with the logistics and supply chain management for the Department of Public Safety and other emergency assets in Montgomery County.

To learn about the benefits of working for Montgomery County, visit [www.montcopa.org/benefits](http://www.montcopa.org/benefits). With questions, email [publicsafety@montgomerycountypa.gov](mailto:publicsafety@montgomerycountypa.gov) or call (610) 631-6500 during business hours.

**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/](https://accutec.com/accufit-9000/). To borrow the device at no-cost, please contact Madison Sehn, Health and Safety Specialist, at [madison.sehn@montgomerycountypa.gov](mailto:madison.sehn@montgomerycountypa.gov) for an orientation.
Department of Public Safety Personnel Changes

**Tabatha Anderson** recently became the 9-1-1 Program Administrator for the Department of Public Safety’s Emergency Communications Division. While new to the role, Tabby has worked for DPS for the past 13 years as a 9-1-1 Telecommunicator and police dispatcher. She grew up in a small coastal town in Oregon and received her bachelor’s degree in criminal justice from Southern Oregon University prior to moving to the east coast. Outside of work, Tabby loves to travel with her fiancé, read, watch horror movies, and spend time with her small white 9-year-old fluffy Bichon dog. She is very much looking forward to getting married next month in Scotland.

Tabatha.Anderson@montgomerycountypa.gov  
(610) 631-6532  
Emergency Operations Center

**Jordan Bartos, Rachel Carter, Malik Chase** (top row, left to right), **Jordan Johnson, Dalton Lott**, and **Felicia Wittenberger** (bottom row, left to right) recently became the Department of Public Safety’s newest 9-1-1 Telecommunicator Trainees.

Over the next 12 weeks, the members of Class 106 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!