HazMat Team Recognized for Pottstown Incident Response

On Wednesday, July 26th, the Department of Public Safety honored 11 members of the Hazardous Materials Response Team for their excellent work on a recent incident in Pottstown Borough. The team was dispatched on Monday, June 5th when Pottstown firefighters requested assistance after a homeowner was exposed to an unknown substance.

Using specialized equipment, HazMat technicians were able to identify the chemical as Phosphorus Trichloride, which is known to cause severe damage to the respiratory system when inhaled, such as pulmonary edema or death. Team officers relayed this information to EMS personnel, who provided rapid transport to the hospital and in turn notified hospital staff of the exposure, allowing them to provide proper care.

Director of Public Safety Michael Vest, Pottstown Fire Chief Frank Hand, and HazMat Chief Brandon Pursell commended the following team members for their response:

Deputy Chief Haydn Marriott
Assistant Chief Bob Scholly, Jr.
Safety Officer Jameson Wendell
Technician John Kelly
Technician Dale Tyczka
Technician Ben Russell

Assistant Chief Vincent DiPaolo
Battalion Chief Peter Bistline
Technician Carl Flack
Technician Drew Ingvertsen
Technician Mike Rubin

Excellent work!

New HazMat 81 to be Placed in Service in September

After years of planning, the new HazMat 81 has finally arrived in Montgomery County! HM81 is a Spartan Metro Star from Campbell Supply, outfitted by EVI. Equipment mounting and driver training were conducted throughout August, and the goal is to place the new unit in service in September. It is currently being housed at the Fort Washington Special Operations Substation.

Photo Credit: Matthew Lesniak
**Recovery Funds Presented to Fire Companies**

On August 3rd, the Montgomery County Commissioners hosted a check presentation for the Fire Services Recovery Grant Program at the Special Operations Substation and Logistics Warehouse in Upper Dublin Township. After the Commissioners allocated $1.5 million in American Rescue Plan Act - State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds for fire companies, the Department of Public Safety partnered with the County’s Recovery Office to design and implement a program to help these organizations mitigate pandemic-related financial hardships.

The $1.5 million is divided among the 69 fire companies that applied for the grant, with an average award of $21,724. Funds will be used to supplement decreased operating revenues and/or cover increased costs. The Department of Public Safety would like to thank the County Commissioners, the Recovery Office, and all of the fire companies who applied for funding!

For additional information about the grant and individual awards, visit [https://www.montgomerycountypa.gov/4326/Fire-Services-Recovery-Grant-Program](https://www.montgomerycountypa.gov/4326/Fire-Services-Recovery-Grant-Program).

**First of Three SWAT Vehicles Delivered**

In late July, the Department of Public Safety took delivery of the first of a series of three new vehicles for Montgomery County’s regional police tactical teams. The vehicles are being purchased using federal Homeland Security Grant Program funds and will be deployed to and operated by the municipal police departments that participate in the regional teams.

This truck will be sent to the western team, while the next two vehicles will be delivered over the next few years and will be provided to teams in central and eastern Montgomery County. The vehicles are capable of transporting both personnel and equipment and can serve as command posts once on scene.

Representatives from Montgomery County SWAT – Western Region were on hand at the Public Safety Training Campus on July 27th to check out the new truck and pick up a set of keys. The Department of Public Safety is happy to be able to provide these resources for municipal partners.
US&R Team Completes Busy Month of Training

On Tuesday, July 25th, 18 members of the Montgomery County Urban Search & Rescue (US&R) Team traveled to Contrast MetalWorks LLC in Pottstown to conduct a metal cutting skills refresher (right). Members rotated through four skill stations, allowing them to utilize three types of torches and battery-powered hand tools that the team carries. This was an invaluable opportunity to practice cutting structural-sized steel and will prepare members to respond to building collapses and industrial accidents. Special thanks to Contrast Metalworks for supporting the US&R team’s operations!

On Wednesday, August 9th, the team conducted a breaching and breaking drill at the Public Safety Training Campus (below, left). Concrete props were built to allow members to complete three types of breaching techniques. Each squad had to complete one dirty breach, one lift out, and one vertical in a confined area and produce an opening large enough for the survivor packaging device to pass through. Each of these techniques poses different challenges to rescue personnel.

Breaching and breaking operations are generally time-consuming. Because of this, special focus is put on technical search to confirm the locations of the survivors before these processes are implemented. Specialized cameras are then used to get a visual of the other side of the concrete to ensure that saws and drills will not come in contact with the survivor. Special thanks to Commonwealth Precast for supplying the US&R Team with concrete slabs and inlets to practice on!

On Tuesday, August 22nd, the US&R Team and UAV Team partnered with the Barren Hill Fire Company and Flourtown Fire Company to host a severe weather drill at the Fort Washington State Park (below, right). Rescue squads composed of firefighters and US&R specialists searched the park for both live survivors (role players) and laminated cards representing damaged structures.

Medical teams treated and transported the injured while squad leaders communicated damage assessment information back to the command post. In a real event, specialized rescue teams would then be deployed to each structure, using the initial intelligence gathered to set strategy and prioritize resources. Many thanks to the Barren Hill Fire Company, Flourtown Fire Company, and Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources!
Delivery of New Field Comm 1 Expected This Fall

The new Field Comm 1, which will replace the current Field Comm 3 as the Department of Public Safety’s main command and communications vehicle, is currently being finalized in Clearwater, Florida!

FC1 will be a 46’ Pierce Velocity chassis outfitted by Frontline Communications. The final inspection is scheduled for mid-September and assuming there are no major issues, delivery will take place this fall.

Photos of Field Comm 1 are provided courtesy of Frontline Communications.
August Activities

On August 9th, the Department of Public Safety partnered with the Methacton School District and Lower Providence Township Police Department to hold an active shooter tabletop exercise at Arcola Intermediate School. Many thanks to the hosts and all of the attendees!

On August 9th, staff from the Emergency Management Division provided a radiological response refresher for the Hazardous Materials Response Team in preparation for the upcoming biennial Limerick Generating Station drill. During the exercise, and in the unlikely event of a real incident, HazMat technicians will assist with radiological monitoring and decontamination at sites for both members of the public and first responders.

On August 19th, the Department of Public Safety’s Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) team attended the Ardmore Rock N’ Ride bike race and music festival to distribute free Naloxone and spread awareness about various DPS programs, including the County’s Overdose Response Team (MCORT). Thanks to everyone who stopped by to say hello!
Fire Academy Accepting Online Registrations, Fall Schedule Now Available

The Montgomery County Fire Academy's Fall 2023 training schedule is now available! Check out the listing of courses, running August 31st through December 9th, at https://www.montgomerycountypa.gov/1006/Training-Schedule

In addition, the Fire Academy is now excited to offer, for the first time, online course registration: https://www.montgomerycountypa.gov/FormCenter/Emergency-Services-4/Montgomery-County-Fire-Academy-Course-Re-436 (must be 18 or older).

Company officers will be contacted before each online registration is confirmed to ensure that the potential student is approved to attend the course. In addition, traditional course registration forms will continue to be accepted (required for junior firefighters under 18). Further your fire service career by registering for a class today!

Registration Open for Montgomery County Hero Fund Fundraiser

Registration is now open and ticket sales have started for the Montgomery County Hero Fund’s 2023 5K, Brews, and BBQ Fundraiser. The event will take place on Saturday, September 30, 2023 (Rain date: Sunday, October 1, 2023) starting at 11:00 AM at the Lower Providence Fire Company Fair Grounds (3199 Ridge Pike, Eagleville, PA 19403).

For more information or to register, visit https://montgomerycountyherofund.org/news-and-events/f/5k-brews-bbq-1.

The Montgomery County Hero Fund is a 501(c)(3) corporation founded in 2012 to provide immediate and ongoing relief and services to first responders and military or their loved ones as a result of a tragedy on duty or in service of the people of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. To donate to the Fund or to learn more, visit https://montgomerycountyherofund.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 this link: Request Narcan® Here. After the Department of Public Safety approves or rejects the request, the requestor will receive an email.

Seats Available: Upcoming ICS-300 Training

There are still spots available in the Department of Public Safety’s upcoming offering of ICS-300: Intermediate Incident Command System Course for Expanding Incidents. The class will meet in-person at the Public Safety Training Campus on the following days and times: Saturday 9/9 0830-1630, Monday 9/11 1830-2130, Tuesday 9/12 1830-2130, Wednesday 9/13 1830-2130, and Wednesday 9/20 1830-2130. To register, visit https://pa.train.org/pa/course/1067423/live-event (Deadline: Thursday, September 7th). For more information, see the flyer in the August Notices.
Department of Public Safety Thanks National Night Out Hosts

The Department of Public Safety would like to sincerely thank all of the municipalities that extended an invitation for DPS staff and vehicles to attend their National Night Out events over the past month: Abington, Bridgeport, Lansdale, Marlborough, Royersford, Springfield, and West Norriton (right). See you next August! For all outreach requests, contact Todd Stieritz at Todd.Stieritz@montgomerycountypa.gov.

EMT Students Graduate from Summer Training Program

After eight weeks of intensive training, the 20 members of the Department of Public Safety’s accelerated summer Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) program graduated on August 3rd. They now have the opportunity to complete written and skills testing and achieve certification as EMTs. Many thanks to the commencement speaker, Dr. Jeffrey Kuklinski, Chief of the Division of EMS for Lehigh Valley Health Network.

Congratulations to the following cadets:

EMT Cadet Tori Anderson  
EMT Cadet Alex Cosentino  
EMT Cadet Marcus Curvan  
EMT Cadet Hadassah Feinberg  
EMT Cadet Anthony Galanti  
EMT Cadet Malcolm Garland  
EMT Cadet Sarah Gries  
EMT Cadet Orchie Hasan  
EMT Cadet Khari James  
EMT Cadet Katherine Lee  
EMT Cadet Noah Lee  
EMT Cadet Jane Markovitz  
EMT Cadet Ellie O’Keefe  
EMT Cadet Joseph Radtke  
EMT Cadet Darin Rapp  
EMT Cadet Cecily Rojo  
EMT Cadet Aimerie Scherluebbe  
EMT Cadet Veronica Urdaneta  
EMT Cadet Brian Wochele  
EMT Cadet Jacky Zheng

In addition, the graduates were lucky enough to have a special guest at the ceremony, Teddy the Therapy Dog from Whitemarsh Community Ambulance Association!
Coming Soon: Next 9-1-1 Application Period Opens September 5th

On Tuesday, September 5th, the Department of Public Safety will begin accepting applications for the next class of 9-1-1 Telecommunicator Trainees via Montgomery County's online jobs portal: www.montgomerycountypa.gov/jobs. 9-1-1 Telecommunicators receive calls for assistance from the public and dispatch police, fire, emergency medical units, and other public safety resources. We're looking for the best to join our team!

The starting salary during initial training is $39,382.74. After successful completion of classroom training (approx. 12 weeks), the salary increases to $45,600.90. Upon certification, which most staff reach approximately six months after their first day on the job, the salary increases to **$50,400.91**. The position is also eligible for a **sign-on bonus**, equal to 10% of the initial starting salary. The County offers an excellent benefits package, which includes:

- **Comprehensive Healthcare Coverage**: medical, dental, vision, and prescription drug coverage; employer-paid life, accidental death & dismemberment, and long-term disability insurance; numerous optional supplemental insurance programs; Healthcare and Dependent Care Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs); and health and wellness support programs
- **Generous Annual Leave & Vacation**: 80 hours of vacation (increasing to 120 hours after five years of service), 40 hours of personal time, 96 hours of sick leave, 11 paid County holidays and additional leave for bereavement, military service, jury duty, and other circumstances
- **Paid Parental Leave**: six weeks per child which is not charged against the employee’s accrued time off (leave can be extended to 12 weeks total under FMLA using PTO/unpaid leave)
- **Pension & Retirement Savings**: pension plan and optional 457B Deferred Compensation Plan
- **Employee Tuition & Higher Education Benefits**: up to $5,250 a year in education reimbursement, plus two-for-one tuition at the Montgomery County Community College
- **Federal Public Service Loan Forgiveness**: qualifying employer

Applicants must have a high school diploma or equivalency and no record of criminal convictions. Other minimum qualifications include: excellent interpersonal, oral, and written communication skills with the ability to complete those skills successfully in high stress situations; adequate computer and typing knowledge; a valid driver's license; and the ability to work various shifts including night shift, weekends, and holidays.

For additional information about the recruiting and hiring process, visit [https://www.montgomerycountypa.gov/4164/Join-Our-Team](https://www.montgomerycountypa.gov/4164/Join-Our-Team). With questions, call (610) 631-6500 during business hours or email publicsafety@montgomerycountypa.gov.

*Note: the online job description and application portal will not be accessible until activated by Montgomery County Human Resources on September 5th.*