Emergency Medical Technicians Graduate from Training Program

On Tuesday, March 19th, 14 Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) students graduated from the Department of Public Safety’s EMT training program. Over the next several weeks, these cadets will go on to test for certifications at the state and national levels. Congratulations to:

EMT Cadet Monique Allen
EMT Cadet Patrick Brentson
EMT Cadet Shawn Cottee
EMT Cadet Jack Gannone
EMT Cadet Joshua Greenberg
EMT Cadet Tenzin Lekshey
EMT Cadet Ellis McCarver
EMT Cadet Breanna Mineweaser
EMT Cadet Tara Pitcaim
EMT Cadet Alexander Rudnicki
EMT Cadet Luke Scilovati
EMT Cadet Justine Stickel
EMT Cadet Derrick Stroud
EMT Cadet Monica Vega

Best of luck to all of our graduates on safe and successful careers in EMS!

Interoperability Established with Pennsylvania Turnpike

Recently, the Department of Public Safety has been working with the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission on an interoperability project that will allow first responders in Montgomery County to communicate directly with the Traffic Operations Center in Highspire using County radios. This will eliminate the need for fire and EMS agencies to maintain additional Turnpike radios and equipment in apparatus. The County’s Emergency Communications Center and field personnel will have separate dedicated talkgroups that are interconnected with PTC District 4 and PTC District 5 for regular operations, as well as PTC OPS_3 which can be assigned for major incidents.

Over the next few weeks, Department of Public Safety staff will be reaching out to the fire and EMS agencies contracted for response on the Turnpike in order to program the new talkgroups into their radios. As other agencies throughout the County have maintenance or reprogramming done, the PTC talkgroups will be added to those radios as well, with the eventual goal of having Turnpike interoperability in all radios in Montgomery County.
HazMat Officers Meet with Colleagues in Philadelphia

On Friday, March 15th, officers from the Department of Public Safety’s Hazardous Materials Response Team traveled to Engine 60/Ladder 19/Medic 37/Hazmat 1 in South Philadelphia for a networking and information-sharing session. Attendees discussed operations from the perspective of both HazMat teams, checked out the PFD’s equipment, and showed off the DPS UAV response unit and drones.

Montgomery County shares a nearly 30-mile-long border with the Philadelphia Fire Department, so it’s essential to maintain a good working relationship with partners in the city. Many thanks to the PFD for this valuable opportunity!

Fire Academy Hosting Summer Essentials Class

Are you a new firefighter or a student planning to be home for the summer who wants to complete your Firefighter I certification, while keeping your evenings and weekends free?

The Montgomery County Fire Academy is hosting Summer Essentials, which will include all four modules of the Pennsylvania Entry Level Firefighter Program and will conclude with Firefighter I certification written and practical testing. Classes will be held Mondays through Thursdays, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., from May 13th until July 2nd (excluding County holidays). Lunch is not provided as part of this course.

To register, visit https://www.montgomerycountypa.gov/FormCenter/Emergency-Services-4/Montgomery-County-Fire-Academy-Course-Re-436

Registration Open for Accelerated Summer EMT Program

Looking to further your career in emergency services? Registration is now open for the Department of Public Safety’s accelerated summer Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) training program!

The class meets on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. between June 10th and August 8th. Each week will consist of three in-person days at the Public Safety Training Campus (1175 Conshohocken Rd, Conshohocken, PA 19428) and one virtual day. The cost of the course is $1,000. To register, visit http://emstrainingcenter.org/ (Deadline: May 20th).
HazMat Team Conducts Training at New EOC Garage

Throughout the month of March, the Hazardous Materials Response Team held two training sessions in the new logistics garage at the Emergency Operations Center complex in Eagleville.

First, on Tuesday, March 5th, members conducted incident response training, during which they had to create a response plan, establish a chain of command, suit up in Level A protective clothing, and make two entries into an unknown environment. While the hazardous substances themselves and specific mitigation tactics change based on the incident, this type of training prepares team members for the basics of nearly any type of response across Montgomery County.

A few weeks later, on Saturday, March 23rd, the team conducted RIT/FAST Board exercises. After a review of recent changes to equipment on apparatus, members participated in several scenarios involving a HazMat Technician who was injured during an entry and needed to be rescued. Each Rapid Intervention Team had to go down range, assess the injured Technician, safely package them using the FAST Board, and drag them out of the hot zone. After concluding the scenarios, members then discussed the next steps in the rescue sequence, including emergency decontamination and suit cut-out procedures.

Planned trainings for April include a foam demonstration in Upper Gwynedd Township, emergency vehicle operator training (EVOT), and an exercise at Dow Chemical in Upper Providence Township.

Division of Emergency Management Staff Provide Drone Demo

On March 4th, the Department of Public Safety provided a drone demonstration for the members of the Glenside Fire Company. Representatives from the Emergency Management Division showed off their fleet of UAVs (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles), both remote-controlled and tethered, as well as their specialized response vehicle. Firefighters were even able to “fly” one of the tethered drones, which can be deployed to local emergency services and emergency management personnel with just-in-time training.

In 2023, the UAV Team responded to 56 incidents, which included missing person searches, SWAT deployments, and large fires. Interested in learning more? Contact Jake Frye, Assistant Director of Emergency Management for Special Operations, at Jake.Frye@montgomerycountypa.gov.
US&R Team Prepares for Upcoming Flood Season

Throughout March, members of the Urban Search & Rescue Team spent time brushing up on their water rescue skills in preparation for the spring and summer flood season. First, the team held their annual swim proficiency and skill evaluation, required for all members on the state roster. The purpose of this yearly session is two-fold: to complete a swim and other necessary basic evolutions and to add in advanced skills that are not typically covered in standard water rescue classes.

For 2024, the team utilized their vehicle-in-water prop, “sunk” below the water line with two passengers seated inside, to practice surface water rescue techniques. Members had to make a shallow water dive entry, swim to the car, and safely remove the occupants (above, right). Surface water techniques are very different from regular swiftwater rescue skills, so the training took place in the controlled environment of a pool. Unfortunately, surface water rescues are a growing concern as more and more people choose to drive through flooded roadways.

A few days later, the US&R Team traveled to the Tohickon Creek in Bucks County for the semi-annual dam release from Lake Nockamixon. This was the second time the team attended this event, which creates whitewater conditions on the otherwise calm creek for several hours and simulates a major flood (left).

Members started the day entering the water at the base of the outflow and conducting self-rescue swims into two identified eddies. From there, the skills began to progress to timing and “go” rescues. Members concluded the training by maneuvering smaller Zodiacs (Boat 20-5 & 20-6) in the narrow waterway, working on handling skills and subject pick-ups.

Department of Public Safety Assists with SWAT Exercise

On Wednesday, March 6th, Department of Public Safety staff participated in a Montgomery County SWAT - Central Region exercise in Limerick Township. The new Field Comm 1, recently placed in service, and the Emergency Management Division’s UAV (Drone) Team were on location to support operations.
Technology Division Reminds Agencies About Radio Installation

Any agency purchasing new mobile radios must have them calibrated and aligned by the Department of Public Safety’s radio repair shop prior to installation. If not completed prior to installation, agencies will have to have the radio removed, calibrated, and aligned prior to programming. With questions, contact Assistant Director Rick Lohwasser at Rick.Lohwasser@montgomerycountypa.gov.

Fire Academy Students Complete Ice Rescue Training

Students from the Fire Academy’s Ice Rescue and Emergency Response program took advantage of a recent cold spell to complete the hands-on portion of the class. The PA Fish and Boat Commission’s Ice Rescue and Emergency course instructs students in techniques for conducting safe rescues on ice and includes classroom, pool, and on-ice practical sessions.

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.montgomerycountypa.gov/jobs or click on the links below. With questions, email publicsafety@montgomerycountypa.gov or call (610) 631-6500 during business hours.

Fire Academy

The Fire Instructor delivers fire training courses in various emergency services disciplines including fire suppression, technical rescue, driver/operator, officer/instructor development, and hazardous materials. In addition, instructors may be utilized to teach specialized courses in subject matters such as emergency management, first aid/CPR, EVOC, PA Fish and Boat Water Rescue, instructional techniques, and fire service administration.

The Ignition Control Officer is responsible to safely construct, ignite, and control fires in the Montgomery County live fire burn building for fire suppression training programs, drills, and exercises in accordance with the Montgomery County Fire Academy Standard Operating Guidelines and NFPA 1403 Standard on Live Fire Training Evolutions.

Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) Program

The Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) Program works collaboratively with multiple offices and departments throughout the County to address the issues of complex patients who use the Emergency Department for the treatment of substance use and behavioral health disorders. The program uses mobile resources to deliver care and services to patients in an out-of-hospital environment in coordination with healthcare facilities or other healthcare providers. This program additionally focuses on substance use disorder patients to prevent unnecessary emergency department visits and establish a clear referral pathway from the field to long-term rehabilitative care. MIH specialists shall be certified PA Dept. of Health EMS workers or RNs with prehospital experience and approved for unrestricted medical command authorization by the DPS Chief Medical Officer. Available positions:

Full-Time EMT | Full-Time Paramedic | Part-Time Paramedic