



Public Safety News

Montgomery County Department of Public Safety

JANUARY 31, 2022

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Department of Public Safety

610-631-6500

Michael Vest
Director

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Public Safety Training Campus

610-278-3500

▫

EMS Training Institute

610-278-2666

▫

Website:

www.dps.montcopa.org

▫

CAD Helpline:

610-631-3001



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Department of Public Safety Seeks Applicants for Job Openings

The Department of Public Safety is seeking qualified applicants interested in joining our team in one of many open roles. Access the job descriptions and apply online by clicking the links below or by visiting www.montcopa.org/jobs.

Montgomery County offers a comprehensive package of benefits, which includes health, vision, dental, and prescription insurance; life, accidental death & dismemberment, and long-term disability insurance; and a pension, as well as numerous other optional programs such as tuition and continuing education reimbursements, Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs), a 457B Retirement Plan, and supplemental short-term disability, accident, critical illness, and hospital indemnity insurance.

Annually, County EMS employees are entitled to 10 days of vacation (increasing to 15 days after 5 years of service), 5 days of personal time, 12 days of sick leave, and 11 paid County holidays.

The Department of Public Safety is also a qualifying employer for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) Program, which forgives the remaining balance on certain federal student loans after a borrower has made 120 monthly payments while working for a government agency or non-profit organization.

Emergency Communications Division

- The [9-1-1 Program Administrator](#) manages 9-1-1 programs, accreditation, records requests, and supports operations and standards sections daily. He or she must have the ability to analyze spreadsheets and related policies and procedures. He/she must be able to effectively communicate one-on-one and in group settings with executives and officials of different departments, organizations, and regional government agencies.
- The [9-1-1 Telecommunicator Trainee](#) will be trained and certified to be the public's primary point of contact when requesting a response by public safety resources. He/she will be engaged in training that requires complete dedication to the course of instruction and instructors. He/she promotes the Department's core values of integrity, respect, and customer service without compromise.

Emergency Management Division

- The [Emergency Preparedness Specialist – Community Resilience](#) works in close coordination with the Community Resilience Coordinator to assist in the development, coordination, and execution of community resilience and recovery initiatives.

Emergency Medical Services Division

- The [EMS Training Assistant](#) is responsible for coordinating training resources; scheduling and teaching both credential-producing as well as continuing education for Paramedics, AEMTs, EMTs, EMRs, and the community.

Technology Division

- The [Communications Systems Specialist](#) is primarily responsible for installing and troubleshooting mobile voice and data communications equipment in a Public Safety environment. He/she maintains broadband wireless mobile data equipment utilizing IP networks, public safety software applications such as Computer Aided Dispatching (CAD), Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL), and communications console equipment.

Note: Positions may require 24-hour, 7-day call for all-hazard emergency incidents which could require response to an incident scene and/or the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). See job descriptions for more information.

US&R Team Expands Water Rescue Capacity for Future Storms

After a busy year for weather-related emergencies in 2020, including the August 4th arrival of Tropical Storm Isaias, Montgomery County Urban Search & Rescue (US&R) Team leadership saw the need to expand water rescue assets to be able to better support municipal first responders. During Isaias and other previous storms, team assets and personnel were responding to calls across the County and were not able to handle all of the simultaneous requests for assistance.



In March 2021, the Department of Public Safety placed an order for two new boats and a supporting trailer (**pictured above**), with the intent to be operational for the 2021 hurricane season. Sadly, with supply chain issues, the arrival of the assets was delayed until December. Now in 2022, the US&R Team has a total of five water rescue boats in service.

The two new boats (BT20-3 & BT20-4) are Zodiac Grand Raid MKIIs with hard floors, each powered by a 40HP Tohatsu motor with electric start and power trim. The specifications are identical to that of the US&R Team's existing boats, which have proven to be a successful combination of both power and size for water rescues in Montgomery County. Consistency in design across the fleet also allows for uniformity in operation for rescue technicians and streamlines maintenance requirements.

The new trailer follows the same design concept as the Team's existing trailer but has a few improvements to make things easier for rescue technicians. The trailer holds two boats, which meets the two-in, two-out concept for safe operations. It can also carry a spare motor and has a storage box for support equipment. Perhaps most importantly, the new trailer features a powered winch to lift the upper boat into its transport position and has some scene lighting for added safety. It also has additional space between the bottom and top storage racks to allow for a third boat or specialized rescue craft to be stowed during events. Finally, the trailer is a two-axle unit, which allows for better towing on highways.

For additional information on the Montgomery County Urban Search & Rescue Team, contact Bill Messerschmidt, Assistant Director for Emergency Management Operations, at wmessers@montcopa.org.



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Montgomery County First Responder Dies in the Line of Duty



*Photo courtesy of the
Royersford Fire Department*

On December 28, 2021, the Royersford Fire Department and Friendship Ambulance announced the Line of Duty Death of Paramedic/Firefighter Michael Lessar, due to complications from COVID-19.

The organization shared the following details via a press release: "Before being employed with the Royersford Fire Department, Paramedic/Firefighter Lessar served his country as a member of the United States Army followed by a career with the Reading Fire Department. Paramedic/Firefighter Lessar joined RFD in 2018 as a part-time EMS provider before transitioning to one of the first full-time positions in the Department's history. His contributions to RFD and the Spring-Ford community included being a clinically sound practitioner and being the catalyst for many improvements within the EMS Division to increase efficiency during patient care."

On December 29th at 12:00 PM, the Montgomery County Emergency Communications Center announced the Line of Duty Death of Paramedic/Firefighter Lessar over the 800 MHz radio system. To listen to the audio, visit <https://youtu.be/-tkoI9SIckQ>.

Cradlepoint Modem Deployment Continues for Fire Agencies

The Department of Public Safety has moved to the next phase of deploying modems and antennas, acquired through the Homeland Security Grant Program, for emergency responder vehicles. Department staff have so far deployed a total of about 575 modems to 88 first responder agencies. While we continue to progress through EMS, we are also now beginning to deploy new modems to **fire companies and departments** throughout Montgomery County.

In order to receive the new modems, agencies should email the following information to DPSCADHelp@montcopa.org:

- 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

All responder agencies are required to switch to these new modems as the Sierra Wireless modems are end-of-life and are no longer being repaired by the manufacturer. The modems and antennas are being provided free of charge in a 1-for-1 swap for the old Sierra Wireless modems. Agencies are responsible for installation charges and carrier data plans. These new modems and antennas provide better speed and coverage as they are capable of accessing all 4G frequencies, many of which had not been deployed by the cell carriers during initial Sierra Wireless implementation.

These new devices, along with upgrades made to our servers, now allow us to be carrier agnostic, meaning if another wireless carrier has better coverage in your response area, you are now able to utilize them. Agencies **MUST** advise the Department of Public Safety before any carrier changes are made and you **MUST** have a Cradlepoint installed before doing so. The Sierra Wireless modems are tied to Verizon and cannot be switched.



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Department of Public Safety Enhances Drone Program

In 2015, the Department of Public Safety purchased two Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) to provide enhanced on scene situational awareness for first responders. Over the years, there has been an increased number of flight requests, while at the same time aging technology has limited the Department's abilities.

To increase response capacity, the Department of Public Safety recently took delivery of and placed in service eight new UAVs. These assets will greatly enhance the Department's ability to provide situational awareness to first responders on complex incidents. The new UAVs include a DJI Matrice 300 RTK (**pictured, right**), a DJI Mavic Pro 2, a DJI Mavic Advanced Enterprise, a DJI Mavic Mini, and four FotoKite Sigma tethered UAVs (**below**). Seven out of the eight UAVs can provide live streaming video via a secure link supplied at time of flight, with approximately 20 to 30 minutes of flight time per battery. The Matrice 300 RTK can provide wide angle, zoom, thermal imaging video, and still imagery through a quad sensor camera. The DJI Mavic Advanced Enterprise and FotoKite Sigma provide thermal imaging and color video or still imagery through a dual sensor camera.



Conventional UAV Operations

The Department of Public Safety will utilize the DJI UAVs to provide continuous situational awareness at incidents or events. The Matrice 300 RTK will be the main flight platform and will be supported by the Mavic 2 Pro and Mavic Advanced Enterprise to provide continued situational awareness during battery changes.

Tethered UAV Operations

The FotoKite Sigma tethered UAVs, purchased through the Homeland Security Grant Program, allow for uninterrupted flight without the need for a certified UAV pilot. The FotoKite Sigma will be deployed as a package as needed at an incident to provide continuous situational awareness. Each FotoKite Sigma comes equipped with a tablet PC for drone and camera operation and can be operated by a DPS staff member or public safety officer who has received a brief just-in-time training.



The UAVs will be deployed in a pair with the Division of Emergency Management primary on-call staff member responding with the Matrice 300 and the back up on-call member responding with the Mavic Advanced Enterprise. The UAV can be requested by an incident commander through the Emergency Communications Center or by contacting the Deputy Director of Emergency Management,

Jason Wilson (jwilson@montcopa.org), or Assistant Director of Emergency Management Operations, Bill Messerschmidt (wmessers@montcopa.org), for pre-planning requests.



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Private Vaccine Clinics Remain Available for First Responders

The Department of Public Safety continues to offer COVID-19 vaccine booster shots and third doses at private, first-responder-only clinics at the Public Safety Training Campus. Boosters and third doses are safe and offer the most effective protection against COVID-19 infections, including the Delta and Omicron variants.



Booster doses are now available for anyone aged 12 or older (12 to 17-year-olds may only receive Pfizer). Third doses are available for [people with moderately to severely compromised immune systems](#). In addition, the Department continues to offer first and second doses of the COVID-19 vaccine for first responders who are not yet fully vaccinated.

If you originally received...	Pfizer-BioNTech	Moderna	Johnson & Johnson's Janssen*
Who should get a booster?	Everyone 12 years or older	Adults 18 years and older	Adults 18 years and older
When should you get a booster?	At least 5 months after completing your primary COVID-19 vaccination series	At least 5 months after completing your primary COVID-19 vaccination series	At least 2 months after receiving your J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccination
Which booster should you get?	Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna (mRNA COVID-19 vaccines) are preferred in most* situations	Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna (mRNA COVID-19 vaccines) are preferred in most* situations	Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna (mRNA COVID-19 vaccines) are preferred in most* situations
*Although mRNA vaccines are preferred, J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine may be considered in some situations .			

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/booster-shot.html>

To register for a COVID-19 vaccine appointment (any dose), please visit <https://www.montcopa.org/3874/First-Responder-COVID-19-Vaccine-3rd-and>.

While supplies last, the Department of Public Safety will also offer seasonal influenza vaccines ("flu shots") to individuals receiving a COVID-19 vaccine. Pre-registration for a flu shot is not required.

All clinics, unless otherwise noted on the registration webpage, will be hosted at the Public Safety Training Campus (1175 Conshohocken Road, Conshohocken, PA 19428). Clinics in February will be held indoors due to weather. Upcoming clinics include (subject to change):

- Tuesday, February 1st: 2-3 PM
- Tuesday, February 8th: 2-3 PM
- Tuesday, February 15th: 2-3 PM
- Tuesday, February 22nd: 2-3 PM

The COVID-19 vaccine and flu shots are also available from the Montgomery County Office of Public Health. Details are available at www.montcopa.org/COVID-19vaccine.



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New Pediatric Hospital Opens in Montgomery County

The Department of Public Safety is very excited to share that Montgomery County is now home to a new pediatric hospital and 24/7 emergency department!



On Wednesday, January 26th, the Middleman Family Pavilion of the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia opened its doors and the following morning, the first pediatric patient was transported to the hospital by Lower Providence EMS **(pictured, left)**. The Department was notified by CHOP that the patient is doing well!

The new hospital, located in King of Prussia, will be an incredibly valuable resource for Montgomery County's EMS providers, giving them an easy-to-access facility for specialty pediatric care. Many thanks to the EMS providers and hospital-based healthcare professionals of Montgomery County for the excellent work that they do every day!

Save the Date: Command Officer Seminar

The 19th annual Command Officer Seminar will be held on Saturday, February 5, 2022, at the Montgomery County Public Safety Training Campus. Coffee and donuts will be served at 8:00 AM, and the program will begin at 8:30 AM with a keynote presentation on The Champlain Towers South Condo Collapse in Surfside, Florida on June 24, 2021.

The 12-story beachfront condominium partially collapsed at approximately 1:25 AM, killing 98 people. Philadelphia Fire Department Deputy Chief Carl Randolph and Captain Ken Pagurek, both members of PA Task Force 1, will present on the challenges faced by rescue teams and lessons reinforced during the weeks-long rescue and recovery mission. The seminar will also include break-out sessions on a variety of topics.

The seminar is provided free of charge, but preregistration is required. Contact Registrar Cindy Myers at cmyers@montcopa.org to register. See the flyer in the January 2022 Notices for more information.

Department of Public Safety Personnel Changes

Timothy Carter was recently promoted to the position of Senior Technician within the Department of Public Safety's Technology Division. Tim has served as a 9-1-1 Telecommunicator since 2013, most recently as a fire and EMS dispatcher and Communications Training Officer (CTO). Tim is the recipient of multiple Emergency Communications Division staff awards: Trainee of the Year (2013) and Employee of the Year (2014).

tcarter@montcopa.org
(610) 631-6511
Emergency Operations Center



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HazMat Team Opens New Year with Interagency Training



Only four days into the new year, members of the Montgomery County Hazardous Materials Response Team gathered for their first training session of 2022. HazMat personnel from neighboring agencies in Bucks and Philadelphia counties were also in attendance at the Public Safety Training Campus for a presentation by Greg Noll, author of the textbook *Hazardous Materials: Managing the Incident*. Greg spoke on the 8-Step Process, his recommended framework for the tactical management of hazardous materials and special operations incidents.

Department of Public Safety Technology Division Updates

Over-The-Air Radio Programming

With the recent addition of over-the-air radio programming capabilities to Montgomery County's public safety radio communications system, the following information may be useful for first responders and other system users:

- All Montgomery County portable and mobile radios can now be reprogrammed over-the-air.
- In order to receive any updates, technical staff at the Department of Public Safety will send an update to any applicable radio using the over-the-air programming method.
- The receiving radio must be turned on and tuned to a Montgomery County system talkgroup, which is any talkgroup that a field user can talk to the County on. Updates will not be received if the radio is tuned to a local talkgroup (e.g., Fireground, POS, etc.).
- The receiving radio will download the update in the background, which will not impact any normal radio operations, and will be invisible to the user.
- Once the update has finished downloading, the radio will chirp periodically, indicating that the download is complete.
- The receiving radio then needs to be turned off and turned back on, which is when the update will be applied (NOTE: the radio will be inoperable for about five minutes during this installation period).
- Any radio reprogramming or updating will reset the radio's "Favorites" bank.

C.L.A.S.S. System Update

On December 31, 2021, the Montgomery County Department of Public Safety's legacy C.L.A.S.S. (Countywide Law Enforcement Alerting & Safety System) was decommissioned. The replacement CLASS system (utilizing the Alertus platform through Integrated Security Systems) has been operational for many months and is already installed in schools and numerous other facilities throughout the County.

The original CLASS system was activated in 2007 and has provided 14 years of reliable, direct alerting capability to the County's computer-aided-dispatch (CAD) system and, perhaps more importantly, peace of mind to many schools and other facilities in which it has been deployed. Agencies with questions about the new system should reach out to Matt Roberto (mroberto@montcopa.org) or Don Fantry (dfantry@montcopa.org).



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SAFER Grant Application Period Closes on February 4th

The FY2021 SAFER grant application period will close on Friday, February 4th at 5:00 PM. SAFER (Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response) is a federal grant program administered by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). It was created to provide funding directly to fire departments and volunteer firefighter interest organizations to help them increase or maintain the number of trained, front-line firefighters available in their communities.

Examples of volunteer firefighter interest organizations include but are not limited to state or local firefighter and/or fire chiefs' associations, volunteer firefighter relief organizations, and associations. SAFER grant funds may be used in one of two areas:

- **Hiring Activity:** Provides federal financial assistance to help fire departments hire new, additional firefighters (or change the status of part-time or paid-on-call firefighters to full-time firefighters) and to rehire laid off firefighters or retain firefighters facing imminent layoff.
- **R&R Activity:** Assists volunteer and combination fire departments and national, regional, state, local, federally recognized tribal, and nonprofit interest organizations with the recruitment and/or retention of volunteer firefighters who are involved with or trained in the operations of firefighting and emergency response.

Learn more and apply at <https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/firefighters/safer>.

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.



Spring 2022 Law Enforcement Conference Registration Open

This spring, the Department of Public Safety will host 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 FBI 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>.



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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.

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 pandemic. 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 EOCLogistics@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://www.montcopa.org/3744/COVID-19-Testing>), 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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