



NEWS

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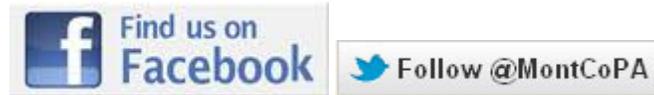
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RELEASE: June 28, 2013

20th Anniversary of 9-1-1 in Montgomery County

Norristown, PA (June 28, 2013) – Montgomery County officially launched its 9-1-1 emergency phone service on June 28, 1993, 20 years ago today, and in so doing made it simpler, faster and easier for our residents to get help when they need it most.

Prior to 9-1-1, Montgomery County residents had to choose from 88 different seven-digit numbers depending on where they were and whether they needed fire, police, or ambulance.

The County's Emergency Communications Center had been dispatching most, but not all, local emergency response units for years leading up the new system.

Over the past two decades, we have worked diligently to improve the system, from the equipment and procedures we use, to the extensive and ongoing training for our personnel.

Today, the Department of Public Safety's Emergency Communications Division is among the top one percent of its peers in certification and accreditation. We are one of only seven agencies in the country that answers emergency calls to achieve both APCO 33 certification and CALEA accreditation.

Under normal operations, shifts of 25 telecommunicators work 24/7 to get our residents and visitors the help they need. They use a Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system to handle 2,100 calls a day, on average. During Superstorm Sandy, we used training equipment and our back-up 9-1-1 Center to put 57 telecommunicators to work answering 1,000 calls an hour at the height of the storm.

Montgomery County has had Enhanced 9-1-1 from the outset, which immediately identifies the address where calls made from landlines are coming from. But nearly three-quarters of all incoming calls now are from cellular phones. Technology upgrades have enabled us to narrow down the location of most cell phone callers to within 300 meters.

We're far from done improving the service we provide our residents. Upgrades that are in the works now will enable us to pinpoint the location of a cell phone that calls 9-1-1 and we look forward to the day when callers will be able to share digital information with responders from their phones.

We're proud of what we've accomplished over the past 20 years and look forward to making additional advancements even more quickly in coming decades.