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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:      June 23, 2016**

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**Montco Sheriff's Office is improving emergency preparedness with countywide active threat response training**

**Norristown, Pa., (June 23, 2016)** – The Montgomery County Sheriff's Office revealed their response to active threats and shooters training for county civilian and law enforcement employees, during a press event at the courthouse.



“One of our primary duties is to provide safety within the ‘Justice Complex’, which includes the courthouse, One Montgomery Plaza and 321 Swede Street,” said Sheriff Sean P. Kilkenny. “In order to increase overall emergency preparedness for active threats, we are teaching critical mental and physical tactics which will help more than 2,900 county employees remain safe, or thwart an attack until the situation is resolved.”

According to a recent FBI study, there were a total of 40 active shooter events in 26 states, in 2014 and 2015.

Fifteen percent of the incidents took place on government or military property. Local active threats and shootings such as a knife attack on a deputy at the West Chester, Pennsylvania Courthouse in 2015, a fatal shooting at the New Castle County Courthouse in Delaware in 2013, and the recent Orlando, Florida mass shooting keep public safety in the news and at the forefront of many citizens' minds.

“It is impossible for first responders to be in all places during an emergency situation,” said Kilkenny. “We want this training to empower others with response options, to help make their own survival decisions.”

The training instruction is led by MCSO C.E.R.T. Commander Cpl. Harry Burke, Team Leader Dep. Edwin Walker and Assistant Team Leader Dep. David Kelly, who have been certified through the National Tactical Officers Association (NTOA) in Police Response to Active Shooter Incidents, in

addition to SWAT training. C.E.R.T. Team members have already met strict physical agility requirements and received 100 hours of specialized emergency response training including, field force operations, the use of long range less lethal impact munitions, riot control agents, field force extrication techniques, active threat and shooter response, counter-terrorism and weapons of mass destruction.

The remaining MCSO law enforcement and the Montgomery County Detectives Bureau have received four hours of active threat and shooter response training, which includes acting according to emergency response protocols in collaboration with other local first responders, using tactics to neutralize or contain the threat, marking potential hazards, and executing a rapid evacuation.

Civilian employees are completing one hour of training, and are taught to seek evacuation methods, and to identify places to hide in advance of a threat. They are also shown how to take action against the threat, if no other options are available, and what to do when law enforcement arrives.

Kilkenny said that the “community” approach to the potential lifesaving training throughout the county has helped build a stronger level of trust between his office and other departments.

Training has been already completed for approximately 400 employees including, the Sheriff’s Office law enforcement and civilian staff, the Detectives Bureau, court staff, the Prothonotary’s Office, Veterans Affairs, Juvenile Probation, and the Office of Children and Youth. Over the next few months, the district court offices, the Health Department, the Conservation District, Election and Voter Services and Adult Probation will also receive training.

“We have an advantage because we are in a secure environment with trained law enforcement,” said Burke. “Active threat and shooter incidents are more likely to end very quickly, and with fewer fatalities, under those conditions.”

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