

## **9-1-1 Communications Center**

The 9-1-1 Communications Center is staffed 24 hours-a-day, seven days a week to provide the citizens of Chester County with emergency call receipt, interim assistance, response coordination and responder dispatch. The Communications Center staff handles over 850 emergency calls each day. The Center has a translation service for over 200 languages and is equipped to expeditiously handle calls from hearing impaired citizens.

Center telecommunicators are trained during a five-week course, approved by the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) taught by instructors nationally certified by the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials (APCO). Following rigorous academics, simulator training and extensive on-console instruction, telecommunicators are awarded nationally recognized APCO certification.

The dispatchers in the 9-1-1 Communications Center receive additional training on how to notify and coordinate police, fire, rescue and ambulance responses in a variety of situations from routine to major disaster.

The operation of the 9-1-1 Center is coordinated with the County Police Chiefs Association, the County Fire Chiefs Association and the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Council, Inc.

Supporting the dispatchers are sophisticated networks of computers and other telecommunications equipment providing links to the State Police, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), PEMA, and other local and regional response organizations. Twenty-four inbound 9-1-1 lines and 42 inbound ten-digit lines provide citizen access. Call information is stored and

dispatched with the assistance of a

Computer Assisted Dispatch System that provides information about the call and links the emergency to preplanned emergency response options. Fire and EMS crews are dispatched with a countywide audio fire paging system that quickly and efficiently transmits initial information about the call for help. Police and EMS organizations also have mobile data terminals in the units to quickly provide written instructions concerning the emergency. The county has an 800 Megahertz trunked simulcast radio system to provide reliable communications between all county police, fire and EMS units. The trunking technology allows more efficient use of limited radio frequency spectrum and the simulcast feature provides countywide coverage.

At the request of an emergency incident commander, the Department can provide a fully equipped mobile communications/ command vehicle to facilitate on-scene planning and operations.

A rigorous Quality Program ensures the 9-1-1 Communications Center exceeds the standards set by PEMA in providing excellent service to the citizens and emergency responders in Chester County.

The Public Education Team provides age-appropriate programs for Chester County organizations ranging from preschool to senior citizens. There are programs specially designed to support the business community.

# **Chester County Department of**

## **Emergency Services**

**9-1-1 Communications Center  
Call Receipt  
Responder Dispatch  
Interim Assistance**

**Emergency Management  
Planning  
Training  
Exercises**

**Fire Services  
Fire Investigations  
Fire Safety  
Training**

**Emergency Medical Services  
Training  
Certification  
Inspections**

**(610) 344-5000  
[www.chesco.org/des/](http://www.chesco.org/des/)**

## **Emergency Management**

The Emergency Management Division is responsible for planning the County's involvement in mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery for natural or man-made disasters including resource coordination planning for events that affect two or more municipalities. In the event of a county disaster, the Emergency Management Division will activate the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to coordinate efforts of local government with County and State authorities. This central facility provides all county departments with a location to meet and plan the strategy to resolve disaster situations. The use of Geographical Information System (GIS) displays and large screen text displays allows emergency managers to quickly focus on the most critical needs to help save lives while protecting property and the environment. In addition to dedicated telephone and computer links with various emergency response organizations, the EOC is supported by trained and licensed volunteer amateur radio operators able to provide supplemental and independent communications links.

Emergency management planning efforts focus on the 70 sites in Chester County storing federally designated chemicals above the threshold planning level established by the Superfund Amendment and Reauthorization Act of 1986, the 23 dams in the County, and the Limerick and Peach Bottom nuclear power plants adjacent to the County. The yearly review of pre-planned response options is an important link in community preparedness. Chemical emergency planning activities are coordinated with the Chester County Local Emergency Planning Committee.

The Public Information Officer keeps close contact with local media and provides a

continual stream of public safety announcements, articles and interviews while establishing the foundation for rapid and accurate information dissemination in the event of disaster.

The County has organized, trained and equipped a State-certified Hazardous Materials Response Team. These volunteers respond to an average of two events per month.

The Exercise Development Team is trained and organized to plan, coordinate and conduct comprehensive disaster training exercises.

The Emergency Management Division provides county representation to the Southeast Pennsylvania Regional Counter Terrorism Task Force. The goal of this task force is to provide the structure for planning, training and exercises so that the five-county Philadelphia area can quickly and efficiently react to any major event.

All of the electrical circuits in the EOC, the 9-1-1 Communications Center, and the remote radio transmitter facilities are supported by uninterruptible power supplies (UPS) and backup generators.

### **Fire Services**

The Fire Services Division is comprised of the Office of the Fire Marshal and Fire Services Training. The two full time and two part time Fire Marshals provide investigative services in coordination with local officials and the State Police. The Fire Marshals cooperate on about 300 investigations per year. They are members of regional and state arson investigation task forces. The Fire

Marshals also inspect County buildings and certain other facilities for fire safety, conduct fire prevention education and work intensively with juveniles to promote fire prevention. On an average year they are involved in about 1,000 inspections and help about 50 young people understand the dangers of fire. The division also offers over 400 specialized fire and rescue classes for responder organizations and coordinates advanced training opportunities with regional, state and federal training organizations.

### **Field Services**

On behalf of the County Commissioners, and with the advice of the Chester County EMS Council, Inc., the Field Services Division administers the Chester County EMS Region for the PA Department of Health (PADOH). The division operates the Chester County EMS Training Institute that conducts Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and First Responder training plus a variety of continuing education classes for all levels of pre-hospital emergency providers. The division is PADOH designated agent to conduct all EMS certification testing for county applicants. The division coordinates activities and performs licensure inspection for all county ambulance services and as performs accreditation inspections for county Medical Command Facilities. The division develops recommendations for PADOH to improve overall system operation.

The division provides overall leadership, training and administrative support for the Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Team. This team provides county first responders with trained peers to help them deal with emotional difficulties they encounter in the performance of their jobs