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Sheriff Kilkenny announces updated emergency evacuation drill plans for Montgomery County Government Complex

Norristown, PA (August 31, 2016) – Montgomery County Sheriff Sean P. Kilkenny announced the implementation of updated emergency evacuation drills held this week at the Montgomery County Government Complex, which includes the Courthouse, One Montgomery Plaza and 321 Swede Street, in Norristown. The new drills focused on providing additional training and information to employees about evacuation procedures, and use of the ReadyMontco emergency notification system.

"There can be up to 1,500 people in and around the complex on any given day," said Kilkenny. "Making sure that they all remain safe during an emergency event is our primary role, and a significant undertaking."

"It's been 18 months since our last evacuation drill and we've refined our plans based on what we've learned from them," said Kilkenny. "The new coordinated effort took several months of planning and required the cooperation of several entities collectively known as the County Unified Crisis Management Team."

The crisis management team consists of Montgomery County's Sheriff, Director of Security, Court Administrator, Director of Public Safety, and Chief Operating Officer. Norristown Police and Fire Departments were also important resources.

Drill procedure changes include giving clearer communications to emergency response agencies and employees, when dealing with a variety of situations, such as active threats, hazardous chemical releases, and weather related emergencies.

MCSO Emergency Response Team Commander Cpl. Harry Burke has been training select employees on the Safety Monitor Program that identifies employees categorized as building monitors, floor monitors, or area monitors to assist with emergency procedures, evacuation and accountability.

"Working collaboratively with the County Unified Crisis Management Team, we were able to reduce a 140-page document into an easily understood one-page outline of emergency procedures," said Chief Deputy T. Michael Beaty. "The chart provides general guidelines for potential emergencies that may arise, and is being placed in every workspace in the Complex."

Text messages, emails and phone calls will inform subscribers to the ReadyMontco system when evacuations are underway, provide timely updates, and notify them when it is safe to return to the area.

The new plan also provides alternative assembly area locations, and empowers team leaders to make and communicate appropriate deviations from the plan, during a real-time event, as long as proper notification is given to the Sheriff's Office.

"It is critical that we consistently review our safety procedures in order to ensure the highest level of public safety, so we plan to have the drills annually" said Kilkenny. "I appreciate the collaborative effort of our local public safety and emergency responders, and employees to help us continue best practices in this area."

To receive alerts and stay informed of weather and other emergencies in the area, sign up for ReadyMontco.

For more information about the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office, visit www.montcopa.org/sheriff. You may also follow the MCSO on Facebook at www.facebook.com/montcosheriff, on Twitter @MontcoPASheriff, and on Instagram at @Montcopasheriff.

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