



Cumberland County  
Department of Public Safety

# The Communiqué

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Department of  
Public Safety**

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## 2008 Weather Exercise

By: Megan Moriarty

Once again the Department of Public Safety participated in the National Weather Service, Weather Emergency Preparedness Week by participating in the 23rd Annual Hazardous Weather Exercise conducted statewide on March 13, 2008. This years exercise consisted of a severe thunderstorm that struck Cumberland County as well as several other counties within Pennsylvania. The storm caused major flooding, high winds, lightning strikes and tornados. The scenario is intended to include the testing of all procedures necessary for an adequate reaction to an emergency situation, from the timely notification and warning of an impending emergency situation to an evacuation from

an affected area. All of these actions are executed in coordination and cooperation between State, Regional, County and Municipal emergency management agencies.

The EOC was activated and staffed with 20 people. Representatives from the Cumberland County Red Cross, Cumberland County Prison, and Cumberland County Mass Casualty Response Team were on hand in the EOC to assist as well. All schools, daycares, and nursing home facilities were invited to participate in the drill as well.

This exercise was once again a great opportunity for the EOC staff to become more familiar with the NIMS forms. The EOC staff also received

several “calls” throughout the exercise. These calls consisted of reports of flooding, injuries, the closing of the Carlisle Barracks, and a report that the part of the prison had been destroyed. EOC staff had to react accordingly to these situations and did so in a rather resourceful manner.



## Emergency Police Dispatch Training Completed

By: Megan Moriarty

The dispatchers of the Cumberland County 9-1-1 center are now 100% Emergency Police Dispatch (EPD) certified. The dispatchers have been using the EPD protocol system for some time utilizing the manual card system, but just recently gained the capability to use the electronic EPD in conjunction with the CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch) system. EPD allows dispatchers, through a series of predetermined questions to “safely and accurately prioritize responses to Law Enforcement Incidents (www.prioritydispatch.com).” EPD also allows dispatchers to deliver pre-

arrival instructions, improve scene safety, and response effectiveness.

With several new dispatchers in need of EPD training and all dispatchers in need of training for the EPD CAD interface software, the DPS dispatchers spent 700 man-hours over a two week period completing the required training. The three day EPD course was completed by 22 individuals, including several dispatchers from neighboring counties. The three day course consisted of topics such as an Introduction to EPD, Dispatch Stress, Legal

issues of Police Dispatch, EPD Protocol and Instruction, and Quality Improvement. After completing this course the dispatchers were required to take a comprehensive exam to obtain their certification. All 22 participants passed and obtained certification. All 38 DPS dispatchers attended the four hour session which trained them on using the EPD system within the CAD system.

### Inside this issue:

MCIRT	2
River Rescue	2
Carlisle Barracks Drill	3
Communications Corner	4
<b>*NEW*</b> Safety Net	5
<b>Special Feature:</b> Melvin Monismith	6

## **PUBLIC SAFETY SUMMERFAIR OPEN HOUSE ANNOUNCEMENT!!!!!!**

The 2008 Open House will be held on July 2nd from 11:00 am to 3 pm. The location of the open house has changed for this year. The event will be held at the Cumberland County Allen Road facility.

**We hope to see you there!**



## **Mass Casualty Team Seeking Volunteers**

By: Megan Moriarty

With plenty of potential for mass casualty incidents in and around Cumberland County, it is no wonder the Cumberland County Mass Casualty Incident Response Team (MCIRT) was created. The team was originally organized in 1987 and has continued to grow and evolve with the ever changing emergency services for the past 20 years. The team's mission is to provide subject matter experts for the coordination of mass casualty

incidents within Cumberland County and the surrounding areas. The MCIRT team currently consists of 9 members who come from a variety of emergency services backgrounds. The team also assists the county Special Hazards Operations Team (SHOT) by providing medical support to the team. MCIRT actively drills with DPS throughout the year. These drills have included the recent Dark December Exercise, the MS-1 Drill

and the TMI exercise held every two years. The team is placed on standby when President Bush and other government officials visit the county. This year the team will continue to provide many training opportunities for its members. This training will include terrorism and triage courses as well as working towards NIMS compliancy. The team also works diligently to fortify relationships with all emergency services groups within the

county and educate emergency services personnel on the services they provide. The MCIRT team is currently seeking members. The team welcomes applicants with any type of emergency services background (Fire, EMS, Law Enforcement, Administrative). If you are interested in joining the MCIRT team or learning more about the team, please call 240-6400!

## **800 MHz System Assists with River Rescue**

By: Doug Glass

On Sunday evening February 24, 2008, an individual attempting suicide jumped from the I-83 south bridge into the Susquehanna River. Dauphin County, with operational jurisdiction for the river, requested units from New Cumberland River Rescue and West Shore Bureau of Fire to provide assistance in the search. Cumberland County units were dispatched at 21:04 HRS, with assignments for West Shore Bureau of Fire to check the shore line downstream of the south bridge, and New Cumberland River Rescue to launch water craft to assist in the water search. New Cumberland River Rescue was in obvious communications with Dauphin County units on the command channel throughout the incident. A State Police helicopter was requested through Dauphin County incident command. At 21:38 HRS

Trooper 6 contacted Cumberland County dispatch on the Cumberland Inter-Ops talk group. Basic information was exchanged and a console-based patch was initiated between the Fire Ops 3 and Cumberland Inter-Ops talk groups to establish direct communications between the helicopter and ground. Additional information was exchanged between the air and ground units including communications from the Cumberland water craft that the incident command was on Dauphin 33.84 MHz. Trooper 6 notified our units they no longer had low band capability so communications continued on the OpenSky systems with ground units relaying communications to Dauphin units. At 21:43 HRS Trooper 6 advised they were using FLIR (Forward Looking Infrared) and night vision equipment and requested more information on

the actual river conditions. Cumberland units provided the requested information including the water temperature reading that was 38 degrees Fahrenheit. At 21:45 HRS Trooper 6 advised a heat source was detected near one of the islands downstream of the bridge and lit the area with a spot light. A series of transmissions ensued with Cumberland and Dauphin boats converging on the location. At 21:48 HRS ground units indicated they made contact with the subject and at 21:49 HRS indicated the subject was on board one of the Dauphin boats. Comments were received from both New Cumberland River Rescue and State Police that the success of this rescue was the result of direct air to ground communications.



## DPS Staff Attends Homeland Security Conference

By: Megan Moriarty

The South Central Task Force (SCTF) sponsored the annual Homeland Security Conference held at Harrisburg Area Community College. The conference was held this year from March 25th-28th. SCTF is a trendsetter with this conference as they are the only task force in this area offering such a valuable program.

A total of 7 DPS staff at-

tended over the four days and several DPS volunteers from the Local Emergency Planning Committee, Local Emergency Management Coordinators, SHOT team and Local Emergency Management Coordinators. Topics at the conference included Avian Flu, Business Continuity, Biological Threats, Agricultural vulnerability, and much more.

Attendees were also offered programs that allowed them to take a closer look at past incidents and review valuable lessons learned. The incidents that were profiled were the Beltway Sniper, Hurricane Katrina, Flight 93, and the History of Islamic Terrorism. It was a very educational week for those who attended and DPS looks forward to participating next year as well.



## DPS Participates in Annual MS-1 Drill

By: Megan Moriarty

Seventeen hospitals throughout the state are identified as primary medical facilities in support of an incident at a nuclear power plant. This is done so under FEMA Guidance Memorandum GM-MS-1. Carlisle Regional Medical Center is one of these facilities and recently held a drill to ensure they are ready to receive patients as a result of an incident at one of these nuclear plants. DPS was on hand along with Lower Allen Township EMS to

assist with the drill.

The drill started with Lower Allen EMS assessing and packaging a patient who was injured in the Three Mile Island 10 mile Emergency Protection Zone. The patient, an emergency services worker who was assisting in decontamination, fell and had abrasions on their palms and knees, and was complaining of lower back pain. The patient was suspected to have been contaminated and was transported to Carlisle

Regional. The hospital was evaluated on their ability to prepare the Emergency Room and Staff for a contaminated patient, process the contaminated patient and return the ER to pre-emergency conditions. Nearly 35 Carlisle Regional Staff participated along with 2 representatives from PEMA and 2 consultants from Cocciardi & Associates. DPS provided 4 staff members participating as Emergency Management Staff and Mass Casualty Experts.



## DPS Participates in Drill with Barracks

By: Megan Moriarty

On February 20th and 21st DPS collaborated with Carlisle Barracks on what proved to be a very valuable drill. The two day drill involved nearly 50 people and faced a separate event each day. The first day, personnel at the barracks and the DPS staff were faced with a tornado that had struck the barracks causing wide spread

damage. The second day saw the two groups dealing with terrorist activity and a detonated bomb.

The DPS and the barracks had several objectives in mind when planning and reacting during the drill. They hoped to further develop their Force Protection plan, utilize the Incident Command System

(NIMS), conduct an IOC operational shift change and work fluently with county and regional assets.

The federally contracted exercise evaluators had never been in a civilian EOC. They have been Army Focused on EOC operations, and have never witnessed a civilian EOC in action. This exercise showed

them the capability of a county's EOC, the resources available and how a civilian agency can partner with the military to manage a disaster. The evaluators were impressed with the skills the DPS staff displayed and will be able to take the knowledge they gathered to emergency management agencies across the country.



## THE COMMUNICATIONS CORNER By John Sheaffer



### Assignment of Operational Talk Groups:

An Operational (Ops) talk group shall be assigned by the Communications Center whenever it is essential to maintaining communications for the incident and clearing the dispatch talk group. Operational talk groups will be assigned soon after due units are responding or as necessary should units arrive on the scene and initiate operations early in the incident. If the incident involves Out of County units who do not have access to the Cumberland 800 radio system, these units will be assigned to either conventional channels "Mutual Aid 2 or 3". These channels will be patched to the assigned 800 operational talk group. **Conventional portable communications should not** be assumed as reliable. All operations communications will be coordinated through incident command or OIC until command is established. The command designation will be derived from the Municipal Chief number if one is assigned to the municipality. If no municipal chief is designated, then the engine company number utilized in the box number will be used for the command designation. Should another incident occur within a given municipality or box area in which a "Command" has already been designated, an additional "Command" can be designated. This "Command" will assume the same command number and be designated with an additional alphabetical letter.

EXAMPLE: First Incident - "Command 33"  
Second Incident - "Command 33A"

### Assignment of Multiple Talk Groups for Multiple Divisions or Groups:

On major incidents, multiple talk groups may be assigned to affect good communications at the incident. Examples of these would be "Command", "Operations", "EMS", and "Water Supply". Upon determination of the need for multiple talk groups, the Communications Center will assign talk groups. The initial talk group that was assigned to the incident will become the Operations talk group to alleviate any unnecessary VTAC detachment/attachment by personnel working in hazardous environments. Command and any additional assignments will assume new talk groups. If talk group assignments require a VTAC/Portable change, any portable that is attached to a VTAC will need detached from the VTAC prior to changing the talk group. Once the talk group selection is made, another VTAC will need activated on the newly assumed talk group. Once the VTAC is activated, the portables that have moved to this talk group will need to attach to this VTAC. The multiple Divisions or Groups will communicate their needs to the established Incident Command. Incident Command is responsible to relaying any requests to the Communications Center via the Command talk group. Command will have to coordinate the use of multiple radios in the Command Area to monitor the additionally assigned talk groups on the scene if they deem such to effect radio communications with the Divisions or Groups and Command.

### Firefighter Down/Distress Communications Procedures

The Emergency Button is currently disabled on all Fire radios. The following procedures are in place until such time this capability is available. Your personal PASS device is still considered your first line of defense. If a fire fighter is in distress or in need of assistance due to a life-threatening situation, the fire fighter will transmit "Mayday" on the assigned Ops talk Group. If the Incident Command hears the distress call, they will advise Headquarters that a mayday situation is occurring. Headquarters will activate the warble tone and announce the following on the fire ground channel:

"Attention units operating on Box \_\_\_\_\_, clear the talk group for mayday transmissions".

If Headquarters hears a distress call, they will advise Command immediately and make the above announcement. Units operating on the scene will immediately cease transmitting unless they have urgent traffic related to the distress call. Units will await instructions from Command. Specific rescue operations will remain on the originally assigned fire ground operations talk group. Additional talk groups may be requested if needed for continued suppression activities to assure a clear channel for any rescue operations. If additional talk groups are needed, any portable that is attached to a VTAC will need detached from the VTAC prior to changing the talk group. Once the talk group selection is made, another VTAC will need activated on the newly assumed talk group. Once the VTAC is activated, the portables that have moved to this talk group will need to attach to this VTAC. The Incident Command will communicate with the firefighter and initiate necessary actions. Upon conclusion of the situation, Command will notify Headquarters and advise of updated talk group requirements.



## The Safety Net

As part of the DPS effort to promote safety in the emergency services a safety section has been added to the newsletter. The information discussed in this section will be geared towards Fire, EMS and Law Enforcement Personnel. The latest in safety concerns will be addressed as well as reoccurring safety concerns. The information in this section can be utilized to train and better prepare personnel on the dangers that face them. If you have any important safety information you would like to see in the newsletter, email it to Megan Moriarty at [mmoriarty@ccpa.net](mailto:mmoriarty@ccpa.net)!

### The Risk of Flashovers

By: Billy Hutcheson

In the fire service firefighters are always subject to dangerous situations. Highways, interior fire attacks, and confined spaces are just a few of the risky situations they face, with not one of these any more feared than the other, with the possible exception of one, a flashover! A flashover is defined as a "near simultaneous ignition of all combustible material in an enclosed area." When all the objects in a room reach fire point, the objects give off flammable gases that are hot enough to combust. It is said that temperatures in the room could be as high as 2000°. The average however, is between 1000° and 1500°. When a flashover occurs no one survives. That includes civilians and firefighters. The Handbook of Fire Protection mentions the point of no return for a firefighter involved in a flashover is 5' from a door or

window. This takes into consideration that fact that the average person travels at 2.5 feet per second and flashovers occur in a matter of mere seconds. With little time to react and high temperatures, it is not hard to understand why flashovers are an extremely relevant safety concern.

The best way to protect against a flashover is by knowing the signs of a flashover. There are two key indicators of a flashover. They are: fire mixed with smoke and rollover. Rollover is the sporadic flash of fire mixed with smoke at the ceiling level. When a room is so hot to the point it forces you to the floor you must consider the probability of flashover. There are a few counter measures that can be taken to help reduce the chance of flashover. Ventilation is one of those. By ventilating a window to the room involved, you are releasing the super-

heated gases thus slowing flashover progression. This also results in increased visibility. By not venting but shutting the door to the fire room, you deprive the fire of oxygen, this slows the combustion rate. The use of a portable extinguisher can help as well. By discharging the extinguisher you will temporarily cool down the room in turn helping to delay the flashover. Flashovers, a potentially fatal danger to firefighters can be easily slowed down by performing one of the mentioned procedures. A good firefighter must also know the tell-tale signs of a flashover so as to help reduce the likelihood of being caught in one. It is important to educate yourself and fellow firefighters further on this important issue.

### Attention All Emergency Services Personnel: Are you ready for November 24, 2008?

By: Megan Moriarty

Every year hundreds of emergency services personnel are killed or seriously injured while assisting with incidents on our nations roadways. One of the most common reasons for these avoidable tragedies, emergency personnel are not visible enough to drivers during these incidents. In recent years many emergency responders have been issued reflective safety vests to help mitigate this problem. The vests at this time are optional and many responders do not wear them. On November 24th it will no longer be an option, all responders will be required to wear the reflective vests according to the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) recently added part 634, Worker Visibility to Title 23, Code of Federal Regulation.

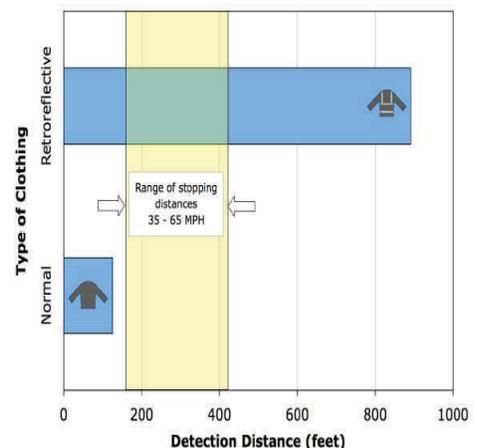
The regulation states that "all workers within the right-of-way of a Federal-aid highway who are exposed either to traffic

or to construction equipment within the work area shall wear high-visibility safety apparel. This apparel must meet the Performance Class 2 or 3 requirements of the ANSI/ISEA 107-2004 publication *American National Standard for High-Visibility Safety Apparel and Headwear.*" The definition of "workers" under this regulation includes all responders to incidents on or near roadways, including fire, EMS, and law enforcement personnel.

The Cumberland Valley Volunteer Fireman's Association (CVVFA), which, through such publications as the *Protecting Emergency Responders on the Highways: A White Paper* (made possible by a grant from the U.S. Fire Administration), was extremely instrumental in getting this regulation passed. The CVVFA is a great source to learn more about the regulation, highway safety and general emergency responder safety. Their site at

[www.respondersafety.com](http://www.respondersafety.com) is currently offering free training on the safety vest regulation. Visit today and learn how to keep yourself and your fellow responders safe and visible!

### Seeing distances and stopping distances



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Melvin Monismith

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## Employment Opportunity DPS Seeking 9-1-1 Dispatcher Applicants

**Job Vacancy Location:**

Department of Public Safety-New Prison

**Job Title:**

911 Dispatcher I

**Classification:**

Grade 5 Step 1, \$13.81 per hour

**Hours:**

Full-Time-48 hours bi-weekly (12 hour shifts)

**General Description:**

This entry-level position is in the areas of Call taking, Police Communications, and Police data entry. Duties include operation of a computer aided dispatch system, telephone and radio based computer systems, and other related equipment. Shift work, weekends, over-time, and holidays are required. Applicants are required to take knowledge, skills, and abilities based computer test. Successful applicants will be interviewed and required to sign a release authorizing employment and criminal history background checks.

**Requirements:**

Ideal candidate will have high school diploma or equivalent and basic computer skills.

**Application Deadline:**

Please send resumes/applications to Cumberland County Human Resources Department, One Courthouse Square, Carlisle, PA 17013, or [humanresources@ccpa.net](mailto:humanresources@ccpa.net).

## PUBLIC SAFETY SPECIAL FEATURE

### Melvin Monismith Celebrates 35 Years of Service

By: John Sheaffer

This quarters special feature highlights the career of Melvin Monismith, the 9-1-1 Administrative Manager. Melvin is entering his 35th year of dedicated service to Cumberland County. Melvin graduated from Carlisle High School in 1972. In March of 1973, he started his career as a dispatcher working the 4-12 shift at the Communications center which was located in the basement of the Courthouse under the direction of Chief Dispatcher, Creedon Shatto. Melvin assumed the leadership role of the 4-12 shift in 1975 and was appointed shift supervisor when the Center added staffing in April of 1977 with the initiation of 9-1-1 service in Cumberland County. Melvin served several administrative roles in this position prior to becoming the

Police Supervisor. As Supervisor "A", Melvin handled Police operations and filled the role of T.A.C. Officer for our CLEAN and NCIC systems.

Melvin continued to work within the Communications Center work force until 1998 when he was assigned to office duty. He continued to handle his administrative supervisory assignments. In 2006, Melvin was appointed to the newly created Administrative Manager position. His duties today include Communications Center scheduling, T.A.C. officer functions, payroll, and other employee/departmental administrative support. On behalf of the entire department, thank you Melvin for your hard work and service to this department and the citizens of Cumberland County.

