

# The Responder

An informational source for the  
Emergency Responders of Chester County

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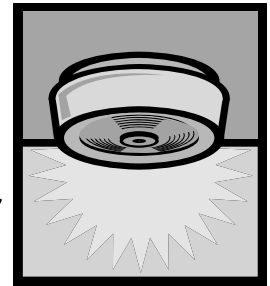
## Fire Prevention Week Proclamation



Pictured above: Commissioners Don Mancini and Carol Aichele, Chester County Fire Chief's Association President Glenn Allison, Chester County Fire Marshal Harrison "Digger" Holt and Commissioner Pat O'Donnell.

## Daylight Savings Reminder!

Don't forget to  
Change your  
clocks on October  
29 and don't for-  
get to change your  
batteries in the  
smoke alarms!



## HazMat Team Members Obtain NFPA Certification

Members of the Chester County Hazardous Materials Response Team have been training over the past several months to reach an important milestone of completing the NFPA 472 Hazardous Materials Operations Certification. This required the members to test their knowledge and demonstrate their skills against the requirements of chapter 5 of *NFPA 472 The Standard for Professional Competence of Responders to Hazardous Materials Incidents 2002 Edition*. Bucks County Emergency Services Training Center offers the certification through the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress and developed the training program that was used.

This was a joint initiative between the Hazardous Materials Team and the Chester County Fire Training Academy with a win for both groups. The Hazardous Materials Team needed to obtain the operations certification before moving towards the technician certification and the fire academy wanted to add the Hazardous Materials Operations Certification to their offerings. In order to offer the program twelve hazardous materials instructors took a train the trainer course and then went to Bucks County to take a written test and had to demonstrate eight skill stations. This resulted in them becoming test site evaluators for the Hazardous Materials Operations Certification program.

20 members of the Hazardous Materials Team were used as a pilot group and the first from the County to go through the written test and skills stations. Future Hazardous Materials Operations courses will offer the certifications test to the students.



HMT member demonstrates the use of foam for vapor suppression

## DES Monthly Update

**9-1-1 Operations:** The 9-1-1 Operations Center processed 25,438 emergency telephone calls in September or about 850 per day. There were 973 Fire Dispatches and 24,751 Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Dispatches. The average Fire/EMS dispatch time was 1 minute and 34 seconds. There were 24,751 police responses for the month of September. The average police dispatch time was 1 minute and 46 seconds. We conducted 274 formal quality reviews for telephone, radio and Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD). The combined weighted average of 97% remains well above the Department objective of 90%. We participated in eight Public Education events in September where about 1,000 people were contacted. So far this year we have contacted about 9,800 people and talked to them about what we do in Emergency Services. Comm 1 responded to one emergency and five special events.

**Emergency Management:** There was one full HazMat Team response during the month and two staff responses. For the year there have been 12 Team responses and 14 Staff responses. The EOPs for three Day Care facilities, two dams and one hospital/nursing home were reviewed in September.

**Fire Services:** There were six Fire Training classes with 169 graduates in September. So far this year there have been 1,073 graduates from 59 classes. There were 18 fire / life safety inspections conducted in September. So far this year there have been 1,557 fire / life safety inspections. The Chester County Fire Marshal's investigated 32 fires for the month of September with a total investigations for the year to date of 311 fire investigations. There was one civilian fire related fatality for the month of September, with a total of 4 civilian fire related fatalities for the year to date. The year to date property loss due to fire is approximately \$25 million surpassing the total for the entire last year. The Fire Marshal's office conducted 3 "Juvenile Fire Setters Intervention Programs" for September. The Fire Marshal's Office attended court, related to arson proceedings. The Fire Marshal's Office is actively working with law enforcement relating to numerous and continuing arsons within the County.

**Field Services:** The fall Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) class is in progress with 15 students. Successful licensure inspections were conducted on 11 individual units.

### Fires in Vacant Buildings

Statistics show that firefighters often have a higher risk of injury or death when fighting fires in vacant buildings. For example, six firefighters died in a 1999 warehouse fire in Worcester, Mass., while searching for a homeless couple known to have been staying in the building.

#### Facts & figures

- There were an average of 14,900 fires in vacant U.S. buildings or buildings under construction, renovation or demolition each year between 1994 through 1998, resulting in 13 civilian deaths, 66 injuries and \$118.9 million in direct property damage.
- Two-thirds of fires in vacant properties were incendiary or suspicious, accounting for three-quarters of direct property losses in this category.
- Almost three times as many child-playing fires occurred in vacant buildings as in educational properties.
- There were 5.6 firefighter injuries per 100 special structure (including vacant buildings and

buildings under construction) fires per year between 1993 and 1997, compared to 1.9 injuries per fire at structure fires, in general.

Source: NFPA's *U.S. Fire Problem Overview Report*

DES ADMINISTRATION OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED ON  
THE FOLLOWING DATES:

NOVEMBER 7 - ELECTION DAY

NOVEMBER 10 - VETERAN'S DAY

NOVEMBER 23 & 24 -  
THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

