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SCOTT FRANCE, AICP, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**SUBJECT: Draft Chapter 8: Infrastructure & Municipal Services, Part 1 of 4**

**TO: Comp Plan Development Team**

**FROM: Mike Narcowich, AICP, Assistant Section Chief: Community Planning,  
and Abington Township Planning Consultant**



The Township's  
Fire Training  
Facility, Florey  
Road

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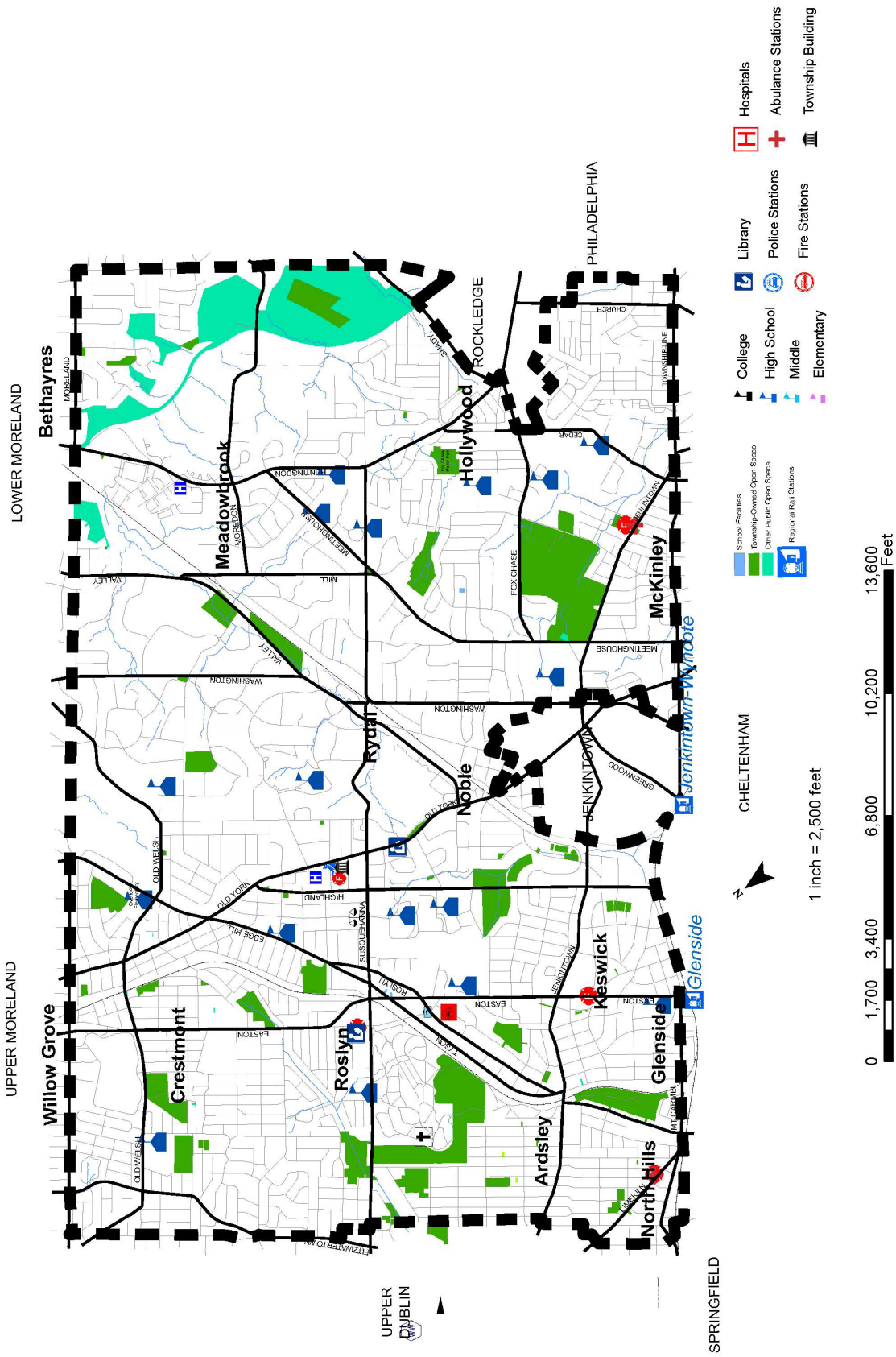
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## **8.1 Introduction**

Abington residents benefit from high-quality infrastructure and municipal services. This chapter will review issues regarding infrastructure and municipal services, while touching on some of the major non-municipal services provided in the township.

## **8.2 Municipal Governance and Administration**

The township is governed by a fifteen-member Board of Commissioners, each of whom represents a ward. This governing body appoints and sets policy for municipal administration, which is directed by a township manager, who is the chief executive and administrative official. The Board of Commissioners continuously works with the Office of the Township Manager to ensure that Township policies are comprehensive, accountable and transparent.





### *8.2.1 Office of the Township Manager*

The Township Manager as the chief executive and administrative officer of the Township, among other things, directs and administers all executive and non-legislative activities of the Township, except as otherwise provided by statute or ordinance. The organizational structure includes the selection of key department heads and other management positions and professional consultants to ensure that the goals and objectives of the Board of Commissioners and Administration are met.

In 2018, the Township Manager introduced goal setting and prioritization as decision making tools for policy and operating budget decisions. In 2020, goal setting and prioritization, albeit during COVID-19 pandemic, was expanded to strategic planning focus areas as part of the township's fiscal year budgets. In 2022, the Board of Commissioners appropriated the necessary funding to continue to engage in strategic planning to continue to refine clear focus areas and drive future targeted funding priorities through 2024. The overarching goal of strategic planning is to create a clear vision, establish focus areas, continue policy driven accountability and fiscal responsibility. Continuous improvement in process, operations and functions through established priorities based on clear and identifiable goals, objectives, and guiding principles will continue. The Township Manager continuously works to execute the strategic plan and ensure its integration into all operations, decision making and budgetary planning.

### Communications/Public Information

The Office of the Township Manager (OTM) administers communications across all Departments, working to ensure timely, accurate, and consistent information about services and items of public interest through various means of communications. Methods of communication include:

- The township website<sup>1</sup>
- E-newsletter
- Social media accounts including Facebook<sup>2</sup>, Twitter<sup>3</sup> and Instagram<sup>4</sup>;
- The Viebit video streaming platform<sup>5</sup>;
- The government access channels (Comcast Cable Channel 43 and Verizon FiOS Channel 24);
- OpenGov budget portal<sup>6</sup>;
- ESRI public web-mapping; and
- Various publications and promotional materials including but not limited to flyers, the new resident guide, the township calendar, the Fall and Winter Activities Guide, and the Spring and Summer Activities Guide.

The OTM updates, on a daily basis, the township website, social media and T.V. channel, in addition to creating videos that highlight township services, events, departments, and topics of public interest. It is also responsible for creating and maintaining meeting agendas and PEAK agenda management software<sup>7</sup> and conducting public meetings in a hybrid manner.

### Information Technology

Information Technology is responsible for overseeing the township's computers and mobile devices, the broadcasting of the government access channel and its online content, email systems, cybersecurity, electronic records, telecommunications, geographic information systems (GIS) and other information systems and technology-related operations.

### Insurance and Employee Services

The Finance Department coordinates the township's insurance programs and claims for all properties, programs, and personnel. The Department is responsible for the timely payment of employees, administration of the township's three pension plans, and processing pension paperwork for retirees.

### Finance

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.abingtonpa.gov/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/AbingtonTownship>

<sup>3</sup> <https://twitter.com/AbingtonPA>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.instagram.com/abingtontownship/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://abingtonpa.viebit.com/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://stories.opengov.com/abingtonpa/published/bO3Q3bhOH>

<sup>7</sup> [https://abingtonpa.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view\\_id=1](https://abingtonpa.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=1)



The Finance Department provides financial support for all township departments. It is also responsible for establishing and maintaining accounting systems and controls, in addition to the coordination of the budget and supplementary documents.

### **Billing and Collection**

The Finance Department is responsible for the billing and collection of commercial refuse, sewer district financial agreements, user fees and property maintenance liens. It is also responsible for administering the township's Earned Income Tax and Real Estate Tax Liens with the Tax Claim Bureau.

### **Accounting Systems and Controls**

The accounting systems function of the Finance Department includes overseeing the management of the expenditure of the annual authorized appropriations; providing cash flow management; maximizing the rate of return on investments; controlling purchasing through purchase order process; and management of financial software system.

Additionally, the Department is responsible for establishing and maintaining an internal control system. Internal controls are designed to provide reasonable, but not absolute assurance regarding the safeguarding of assets against loss from unauthorized use or disposition and the reliability of financial records for preparing financial statements and maintaining accountability for assets. The concept of reasonable assurance recognizes that: (1) the cost of control should not exceed the benefits likely to be derived, and (2) the evaluation of costs and benefits requires estimates and judgments by management.

The Finance Department reviews and updates established procedures on a regular basis to monitor the effectiveness of controls and resolve any potential problems identified.

### **Budget Development and Compliance**

The Finance Department is responsible for working with the Township Manager in developing the initial raw data for a proposed budget and is responsible for preparing an initial proposed draft budget for management consideration. In July, each department prepares budget requests and justifications for those requests for the forthcoming year and submits them through the finance office. No later than November, the Township Manager presents to the Board of Commissioners a proposed operating budget comprising revenues and expenditures in all funds subject to annual appropriations and a five-year looking forward revenue and expense projection, along with a budget message spelling out priorities and related information.

Under the First Class Township Code, the Board must adopt a preliminary budget at least 30 days before final adoption. Once accepted, the preliminary budget document is advertised and available for inspection by the public. The Board of Commissioners must adopt the final operating budget by the end of the current fiscal year (December 31). The Township Commissioners may, at any time, make supplemental appropriations by resolution.

Budgetary control is maintained at the fund level, with operating departments charged with the maintenance of budgeted expenditures as a whole. Detailed budget reports are distributed to each department monthly. The Finance Committee reviews revenues and expenditures monthly and fiscal affairs quarterly.

### 8.2.2 Fire and Emergency Services

#### Fire Marshal

The Office of the Fire Marshal has full and part time staff certified in Fire/Explosion and Vehicle Fire investigation. They are the primary Cause & Origin Investigators within the township and provide assistance to surrounding communities upon request through mutual aid.

Based on these investigations, a comprehensive Fire Prevention strategy is developed to reduce the amount of service calls based on the origin and causes of fires within the township. Following a hierarchy of safety, inspections reduce the physical hazards, education reduces the human factor and protection systems reduce the effects of uncontrolled hazards. Full and part time staff provide Fire Prevention services throughout the year. This is a twofold process: staff conduct public education presentations and building fire safety inspections. The Fire Marshal's Office also reviews and issues permits for all fire protection systems installed throughout the township.



Abington Township Fire Department

#### **Fire Investigation**

Fire investigation, sometimes referred to as origin and cause investigation, is the analysis of fire-related incidents. After firefighters extinguish a fire, an investigation is launched to determine the origin and cause of the fire or explosion. Investigations of such incidents require a systematic approach and knowledge of basic fire science.

Fire scene investigators may become certified through the National Association of Fire Investigators (NAFI) or the International Association of Arson Investigators (IAAI). Both certification programs rely heavily on the content of NFPA 1033 and NFPA 921. Both also require an application process detailing the investigator's education, training, and experience, and successfully passing a written examination. Certificates are valid for a period of five years, at which time an investigator must demonstrate continued participation in the field and a minimum amount of continuing education in order to be recertified.

The National Association of Fire Investigators (NAFI), a professional association of fire and explosion investigators, offer several National Board Certified fire investigation certifications including:

1. Certified Fire and Explosion Investigator (CFEI) and
2. Certified Vehicle Fire Investigator (CVFI).

All members of the Abington Township Fire Marshal’s Office are required to maintain certification as CFEI and CVFI through continuous education.

### **Fire Inspections and Protection System Permits**

The Abington Township Fire Department’s Fire Safety Inspection Program is designed to promote a proactive approach to fire safety through prevention. Fire Department personnel will conduct a fire safety inspection of a property with the goal of identifying existing hazards to life and property and to provide explanations on how to correct the hazard(s) and maintain compliance with the Fire Codes.

In accordance with the Fire Prevention Code of Abington Township, the Fire Marshal and/or his designee shall inspect or cause to be inspected all premises on a periodic basis. The Marshal and/or designee shall make such orders as may be necessary for the enforcement of the laws and ordinances governing the same, and for the safeguarding of life and property from fire.



Open house, McKinley Fire Department.

The staff of the Fire Marshal’s Office are certified Fire Inspector Level II and Fire Plan Reviewers. Personnel also possess qualification through the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry as Fire Inspectors. Personnel maintain and recertify their certifications on a regular basis through continuing education and code updates. All personnel are well-versed on local, state and federal regulations, codes and standards, including the International Fire Code and NFPA.

### **Public Education**

The mission of the Abington Township Fire Department's Public Education program is to minimize the loss of life and property resulting from fires, medical emergencies, environmental, and other disasters. One of the ways this is accomplished is through education in schools, homes, and businesses. The promotion of fire and life safety initiatives throughout the community is a vital part of the prevention of injuries and deaths related to fires and other emergencies. The department strives to actively participate in the community, serve as role models, and effectively and efficiently utilize all of the necessary resources at its command to provide a product deemed excellent by township citizens. The Abington Township Fire Department believes that pride, the pursuit of excellence, and commitment to public service is of paramount importance.

Fire and Life Safety awareness programs focus on fire prevention, life safety issues, and hazards in the home and workplace. Programs are targeted to age-appropriate audiences for the material being presented. The Abington Township Fire Department's Public Education personnel offer a wide array of programs throughout the community. Programs are offered from pre-K through the twelfth grade annually.

Classes are held for day care and businesses on emergency action plans and fire safety. Staff attend many community events throughout the year, providing important safety information. The department also offers a fall fire prevention program to the residents of the township. During the month of October, which is fire prevention month, there is an annual Open House at each of the five fire stations that is open to the public. Special emphasis programs and/or training may be available upon request.

#### Fire Department and Administration

The Abington Township Fire Department (ATFD) has been protecting the citizens of Abington Township since 1889. The Department consists of five independent volunteer fire companies:

- Abington (founded 1889)
- Weldon (1904)
- McKinley (1906)
- Edge Hill (1908)



The Abington Township Fire Department participates in the annual "mock crash" event at Abington High School to warn of the dangers of drunk driving.



- Roslyn (1921)

The fire department is the only all-volunteer, accredited fire department in the state. There are approximately 230 volunteer firefighters in the township. In addition to traditional firefighting, the fire department also has qualified personnel trained for vehicle, trench, building collapse, confined space, water rescue, and hazardous materials incidents. It is highly unusual that a community of Abington's size and complexity has been able to maintain an all-volunteer suppression force when most communities half this size have already begun the transition to a paid force. The Abington Township Fire Department first became accredited by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) in 2014 and earned reaccreditation in 2019.

The department operates a fleet of ten modern pumpers, four aerial trucks, a heavy rescue truck, an air truck with compressor, and several small utility trucks. Each individual Fire Company has a chief, additional line officers, a president, and executive officers. Three companies have fire police.

The department also provides mutual aid to neighboring communities. The department trains at its own training facility. The facility allows members to train in live burn scenarios as well as vehicle and technical rescue scenarios. Additionally, the department participates in local and regional drills and exercises



Edge Hill Fire Department, North Hills.

on a regular basis. Firefighters for the ATFD attend the Firefighter 1 Basic Fire Academy class at the training facility and most achieve national-level certification as firefighters. Several members of the department are certified Fire Officers at the national level and the department is certified at operations-level with the Pennsylvania State Voluntary Rescue Certification Program.

ATFD conducts year-round recruitment and retention programs; conducts and assists with public education and community events; provides training, and maintains a physical program to ensure members are fit for duty.

### Emergency Management

Pursuant to Title 35 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, every municipality in the Commonwealth is required to appoint an Emergency Management Coordinator to be approved by the Governor as well as maintain an up-to-date Emergency Operations Center (hereinafter

“EOC”), Emergency Operations Plan (hereinafter “EOP”) and Notification and Resource Manual (hereinafter NARM”). The Abington Township EOP is an “all hazards” plan that is consistent with the requirements of the National Incident Management System that addresses the capabilities of the township to deal with various emergency incidents and is reviewed and updated on an annual basis. The NARM is a listing of contact information for township and county officials and Critical Infrastructure partners, including transportation facilities, utilities, shelters and “special risk” facilities, such as schools, group homes and healthcare facilities. Additionally, the NARM includes a listing of all emergency equipment in the township as well as contact information for equipment rental and contractors for instances where township resources have been depleted. The NARM is reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

The EOC is located in the basement conference room of the Township Building. Since the creation of the EOC in 1996, it has been activated 40+ different times for incidents ranging from large storms (tropical & winter) to planned events that had potential national significance, such as visits from presidential candidates and the papal visit of 2015. Over the past year, due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, we have also expanded our capabilities to include operating a “virtual” EOC, whereby we have developed a system for communicating and sharing critical information between the EOC, the APD, ATFD and Public Works in real time from remote locations.

The Abington Township Office of Emergency Management & Planning (EMAP) staff is comprised of the Director of Fire & Emergency Management Services who serves as the Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC), and several Deputy Coordinators from the Abington Police (APD) and Fire Department (ATFD) that work with EMAP when their particular area of expertise is involved in an incident.

The EOP is updated annually and an emergency management council consisting of the leadership of the Police Department, Fire Department and the Emergency Management Coordinator meets several times per year. The Director of Fire & Emergency Management Services serves as the Emergency Management Coordinator and works closely with the leadership of the Police Department, the five Abington Fire Companies and Second Alarmers. The township is a leader in emergency management throughout the region and maintains regional cooperation partnerships with all surrounding communities. Personal communication and contact with all adjacent departments, county, state, and federal agencies occur on a frequent basis. The Emergency Management Coordinator provides frequent “Situation Reports” to Township Administration to be shared with the Board of Commissioners regarding response and recovery from large incidents such as major storms and the ongoing global pandemic. The Emergency Operations Center is usually activated several times each year, generally for storm related incidents.

## **Equipment & Communications**

The Emergency Management & Planning Staff maintains an array of specialized equipment and communications capabilities that are used to assist Incident Commanders during critical incidents or when other means of communication fail due to system overload or power outage.

EMAP maintains and administers the Ready Montco and Montco SAFER emergency notification systems for Abington Township. These systems are mass notification systems that allow for the sending of emergency notifications to registered recipients on virtually any device that they prefer, including text, email, and voice phone call. The Ready Montco system is designed to send notifications to township residents, whereas the Montco SAFER system is used to make critical in-house notifications, such as APD Tactical Team callouts. The Ready Montco system is used on a regular basis to notify residents about Snow Emergency Declarations and major utility outages.

EMAP also maintains the Mobile Command Unit and the Blue Band Radio system for the township. The Mobile Command Unit was owned by the Montgomery County Department of Public Safety until June 2018, when title was transferred to Abington Township, where it had been maintained and housed for the past 15 years at the Abington Township Public Safety Annex. The Mobile Command Truck is used as a command post for large scale planned events such as the July 4th Festivities and complex emergency incidents as well as for training exercises. It is equipped with computers, additional mobile and portable radios, a public address system, light tower, and a camera tower capable of monitoring an incident from a distance.

The Blue Band Radio system is a backup radio system that is maintained in the event that the county 800 MHZ public safety radio system fails due to system overload or other issues, such as during several storms during the summer of 2020. This system is also frequently used for special events, such as the 24-Hour Relay Challenge and Roslyn Car Show, as well as for coordination of plow train operations between APD and Public Works. Additionally, the Blue Band Radio System is shared with many critical infrastructure partners, as each school in the Abington School District is equipped with Blue Band, as well as the Willow Grove Park Mall Security Staff, Abington Memorial Hospital Security Staff and the Penn State Abington Security Staff.

Over the past several years, the EMC has worked with APD personnel to implement an "Unmanned Aerial System" (UAS) Program for our Emergency Responders. A UAS is more commonly referred to as a "drone." The idea for the program stemmed from several missing person incidents where police, fire and EMS personnel were dispatched to search for elderly dementia patients and autistic children who left their homes and got lost. These types of incidents are extremely labor intensive and involve dozens of personnel walking through inhospitable terrain in hopes of finding the lost person. Depending on weather conditions, when someone is lost in the woods, their survival rate drops dramatically with each passing hour. With new drone technology becoming more affordable, the township began to look at the possibility of adding this new technology to assist responders to find missing victims more quickly at less of a risk to the victims and the responders. Over the past several years, UAS operators conducted dozens

of flights to assist in searching for lost/missing individuals, fleeing suspects in burglaries and car break-ins, as well as providing overwatch for incident commanders during civil unrest operations and APD Tactical Team operations. UAS operators also provide overwatch during planned events such as the July 4 parade. In order maintain this program, each “pilot” must pass the FAA Part 107 UAS Pilot Test. There are currently six (6) certified pilots. The township anticipates adding several more pilots over the next year. The goal of the program is to have at least one (1) pilot available to respond in the township 24 hours per day.

## **Planning**

EMAP Personnel are also heavily involved with the safety and security planning aspect of all large, planned events held in the township, such as the annual July 4th Parade and Fireworks, the 24 Hour Relay Challenge, and Penn State’s Commencement Ceremonies; as well as, any event that might involve large numbers of people or might potentially attract significant attention from the press--such as campaign visits from political candidates. The safety and security planning for such events often involves the coordination of many different organizations to ensure that the event is kept safe, but the safety measures “remain in the background”.

## **Mitigation**

EMAP personnel also maintain the Abington Police Department’s “Safe School” Program, which consists of performing regular site visits to all K-12 schools, colleges and pre-schools to perform security assessments, assisting with “Lock Down” Drills, in addition to offering and providing staff training on topics including Emergency Response Procedures, Situational Awareness & Mental Preparation, and Response to Active Shooter. Although this training program falls within the “Safe Schools” Program, the township provides training to any business, organization, house of worship or critical infrastructure partner that is willing to host the training. The above is a sampling of the training provided in a “normal” year.

In addition to providing training for facilities and organizations within the township, EMAP Personnel regularly conduct security assessments for Critical Infrastructure & Key Resource (CIKR) facilities throughout the township, including houses of worship, the Willow Grove Park Mall, day care centers and health care facilities.

## **Training and Exercises**



The Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC) regularly provides training to township emergency responders regarding disaster response, incident management, and emerging threats. The EMC regularly presents training seminars at the APD's bi-annual Department Wide Training sessions on topics including Hazardous Materials Awareness, Chemical Suicide Awareness, Police Response to House Fires, Police Response to Hi-Rise Fires, Response to Carbon Monoxide Calls, as well as Police response to certain CIKR Facilities that might require a specialized response, such as calls to Schools, Colleges, Health Care Facilities, Industrial Facilities, and Shopping Centers.



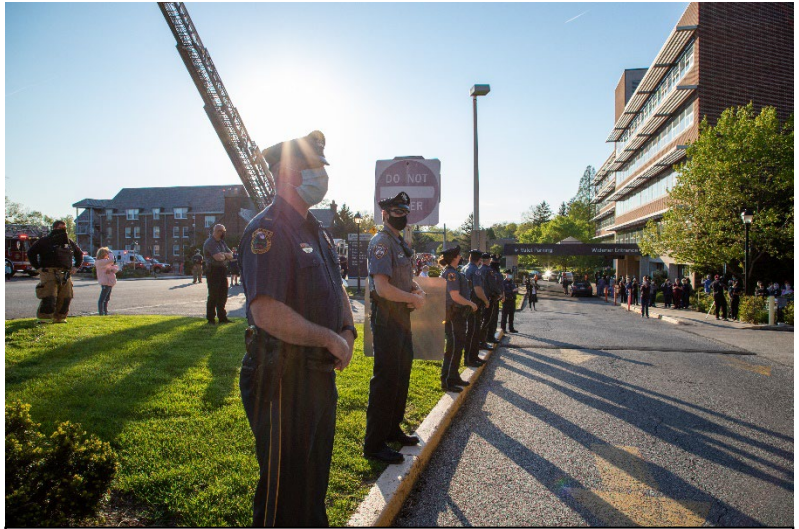
Public Safety Training Center and Public Works Facility, Florey Road (Fire Training Tower, pictured on p. \_\_, is also part of this facility)

In addition to classroom-based training, EMAP personnel participate in and conduct various types of exercises throughout the year, including “Tabletop” Exercises, which are discussion-based exercises, as well as “Field” Exercises, which attempt to simulate an actual scenario. EMAP Personnel participate in Penn State’s annual tabletop exercise designed to test their ability to respond to complex emergency incidents.

### 8.2.3 Police

The Abington Township Police Department is a State and Internationally Accredited Police Agency with an authorized strength of 92 officers and a total workforce of 160 employees supported by an annual budget of over 20 million dollars. The Department was the first of three agencies in the state to achieve accreditation status in 2002. In 2020, it received its sixth re-accreditation award and was elevated to Premier Agency status by Pennsylvania Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission (PLEAC). This award is reserved for agencies that have received re-accreditation at least five times without provisions or an extension.

The Abington Township Police Department is one of only 14 agencies designated with this status, and as an organization, remain committed to excellence. In 2004, The Abington Police received international accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA). In 2010, They received re-accreditation from CALEA with the Flagship Designation, which acknowledges innovative community policing programs that have been successful. The department is one of only nine municipal Police



Abington Township Police Department

Departments (out of over 1,100 Departments in Pennsylvania) to be accredited by the Commission for the Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). In 2020 The Abington Police received its 5th re-accreditation. The Department undergoes an audit with CALEA on an annual basis. The ongoing re-accreditation process ensures that The Abington Police are following the best practices rooted in policy standards established by the Commission which has representatives throughout the country. Within the network of accredited agencies, often new policing strategies are part of an information exchange that enables agencies to respond in a more efficient and effective manner to the needs of community. The department describes its mission, core values, and some of its key programs as follows:

The mission of the members of the Abington Township Police Department is to protect the rights, safety and property of all persons within Abington Township and provide professional service to all who come within its care and jurisdiction.

The members of the Abington Township Police Department will be guided by the values of the community and will faithfully perform its duties in accordance with the United States Constitution, the International Code of Police Ethics, and all federal, state and local laws.



To accomplish this mission more effectively and efficiently, the members of the Abington Township Police Department have adopted the motto, “To Protect and Serve with PRIDE,” along with the established goals, objectives, policies and procedures.

Core values of the police department are “Professionalism, Respect, Integrity, Dedication, and Esprit De Corps (PRIDE).”

Our Department is committed to developing and maintaining the highest level Police Department.

The Abington Township Police Department is divided into four divisions: Community Policing, Patrol, Detectives, and Administration. In addition to the traditional role of a police department in crime-fighting, investigations, and patrol, The Abington Township Police Department prides itself on its commitment to improving the quality of life for all of the township’s citizens. The department has twice been the recipient of the International Association of Chiefs of Police’s “Community Policing Award,” an award given to only a handful of departments in the entire world each year!

### Community Policing Division

The Abington Township Police Department’s Community Policing Division is committed to identifying and addressing quality of life issues in conjunction with our police officers and community leaders. The division strives to develop constructive partnerships with police officers, citizens, businesses, educators, and other agencies and to render efficient and effective services in an atmosphere of fairness, honesty, and compassion. The core value, “Community First” guides our decisions and actions.



The Township Police Department participates in “Operation Safe Stop” to prevent motorists from passing stopped school buses that are loading or unloading.



Abington Township Police Chief and Officers at the 2019 NAACP Banquet with the late Valerie Ward, former Chair of the Willow Grove NAACP

## **Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE)**

The Abington Township Police Department teaches DARE in seven elementary schools, two parochial schools, and one private school within Abington Township. The modern DARE program emphasizes making smart choices under varying conditions. It provides the children with the tools, helping them properly respond to challenging situations as they grow. Each DARE officer spends approximately 30-40 hours each year in the classroom teaching the DARE program and participates in many other school- related events. The DARE Program receives funding raised through community events coordinated by Citizens and Police Together (CAPT).



Abington Township Police

## **Abington/Eastern Montgomery County Regional HUB**

The Abington HUB is a community-policing model in which service providers from across sectors in an identified community meet together to address community-based, multi-systemic risk scenarios by offering quick, multi-agency intervention and support. Although most of these cases are non-police problems, the department facilitates the HUB meetings, providing information and assistance for the HUB to resolve issues. The majority of cases involved persons suffering from mental illness. Others include domestic violence, substance abuse, runaways, families in financial need, and child abuse. Interest in Abington's program by neighboring municipalities has led to the expansion of the program into the Abington/ Eastern Montgomery County Regional HUB.

## **Lock for Life Program**

To enhance the ability of first responders to be able to access the home of senior citizens or younger disabled persons living alone with major medical issues in the case of an emergency, Community Policing instituted the Lock for Life Program. This program provides a lockbox for the front door at no cost to the resident. All the resident has to provide is a key for the home. The code to open the box is placed in the Cody file for the address and is only accessible to first responders.

## **Kids in Safety Seat Program (KISS)**

The KISS program is also funded by CAPT. There are two full-time civilian employees, one part-time civilian employee, and one volunteer in the Division who are certified to install child safety seats. Abington's KISS program is one of the only programs still in existence in our area.

### **Youth Aid Panel**

As an alternative to official court involvement, juveniles who are referred by an Officer and admit their involvement in an eligible offense are offered the opportunity to participate in the Youth Aid Panel program. They and their families meet with trained community volunteer panels to decide an appropriate resolution, holding the juvenile accountable for his/her criminal actions. A contract is signed between the panel and the juvenile tailored to the specifics of the offense. A contract may involve community service, counseling, restitution, and other outcomes. Successful completion of the program by the juvenile will result in an internal disposition. This form of alternative adjudication provides an opportunity for juveniles to remain out of the criminal justice system while allowing them to give back to their community while addressing concerns of disparate impact on minorities.

### **School Resource Officers**

School Resource Officers (SRO's) are assigned to both the Abington Junior and Senior High Schools. The SROs provide a uniformed police presence and serve as visible, positive role models for the school population. The addition of the SRO complements the Abington Police Department's commitment to ongoing school-based outreach programs.

### **Victim Services**

Community Policing's Victim's Services Unit contacts every victim of a crime in Abington Township and connects them with available services.

### **Student Internship Program**

Each semester, Community Policing accepts four college students to intern with the department. These students are introduced to the daily workings of a police department and how each division functions. Students must be enrolled in a criminal justice program, have passing grades, and have a clean criminal background.



Abington Township Police.

### **Neighbor Mediation Program**



The Neighbor Mediation Program continues to help resolve difficult issues between residents. Trained mediators in the Community Policing Division sit down with neighbors involved in disputes that they are unable to work out on their own. The goal is to provide peace and stability to both parties and to reduce the need for police response to these locations.

## **Parking Enforcement**

Community Service Officers are responsible for enforcing metered parking and for collecting funds from parking meters.

## Patrol Division

The Patrol Division is the largest in the department, comprised of four platoons, each working rotating shifts beginning and ending at 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. with daily roll call briefings scheduled at 6:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. There are four platoons consisting of one watch commander who is a lieutenant (working from 9:00 am to 9:00 pm with A/B platoons) and two Platoon Commanders who are also lieutenants (one works for C Platoon and one works for D Platoon). Each of the four platoons (A, B, C and, D) consist of two sergeants and approximately 12 officers. A few officers on each platoon work overlapping hours, ensuring that there is no lapse in police coverage during each shift change. Because each platoon often functions independently and patrol officers are expected to function in a variety of roles, it is critical that the department distributes a diverse group of officers with special skills across all four platoons as much as possible. For example, platoons are typically comprised of a K-9 officer, Field Training Officers, tactically trained SWAT officers, Motor Vehicle Accident Reconstructionist and Investigators, DARE Instructors, Firearms-Range Instructors, Crisis Negotiators, Evidence Technicians, Certified First Aid and CPR Instructors, Honor Guard Unit officers, drone operators, and members of the Bike Unit. Having these specialty officers assigned to each platoon enhances capabilities to respond to the rapidly changing nature of the community's calls for service in a safe and efficient manner. Above all, it increases the likelihood that citizens and officers remain safe.

Officers are typically assigned to specific zones or geographic areas of the Township known as "beats". Officers assigned to beats are expected to assume responsibility or adopt a "beat-ownership," which fosters a sense of pride and teamwork for the beat officers and improves the overall level of accountability. Guided by the principles of community-oriented policing, the department developed a Patrol Division management and operations system merging and applying aspects of community-oriented policing, problem-solving, and Compstat (COPPStat). As part of this program, each patrol lieutenant and their two sergeants are assigned to one of four geographic quadrants in the township. They, along with the beat officers, are responsible for traffic complaints, crime trends, neighbor disputes, and many other issues that impact the quality of life.

The Abington Police Department utilizes the latest technology and equipment in its patrol vehicles and is outfitted with a substantial amount of equipment. The Patrol Division has always

maintained other first aid equipment that has been used successfully to save many lives over the past decades. In recent years officers have also begun carrying personal protective equipment (PPE), sanitizing materials, safety equipment for crowd control, and in partnership with Abington Jefferson Health and Montgomery County, Narcan. In addition to maintaining, monitoring, and reevaluating the equipment described above, it also responsible for special situation equipment such as personal flotation devices and ropes for flooding or DUI equipment.

The police department also provides staffing for an officer to work at the Willow Grove Park Mall. This position is fully funded by the mall's management company. The officer works a schedule that coincides with the busiest hours of operation and is responsible for all police calls for service on mall property.

### **Canine Unit**

Traditionally, the K9 unit has been made up several canine teams with each canine team consisting of a canine handler and his/her assigned police canine. Canine teams are patrol trained and often have a scent specialty of either explosives or narcotics. Canine teams play a vital role in providing effective police services. Some of the important tasks they are relied upon for include: tracking suspects or missing persons, assisting with crowd control, performing public service events, and assisting with narcotics or explosive investigations. In addition, the unit is a career development opportunity for officers, helping attract quality candidates in the recruitment process.

The Abington Township Canine Unit trains to the standards set by the United States Police Canine Association. Abington Township Police Canine Teams have earned certifications from the United States Police Canine Association (USPCA) and from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF). They have also won numerous awards for obedience, criminal apprehension, agility, and explosive and narcotics scent-tracking competitions

The Abington Township Canine Teams are deployed here in Abington and throughout Montgomery County as part of mutual aid agreements. Canine deployment includes narcotics sniffs, explosives sniffs, tracking, building searches, article and personnel searches, area searches, and criminal apprehension. Abington Township Canine teams are an important asset to the community-policing model, which helps the department connect with the community.

### **The Tactical Team**

The Abington Township Police Tactical Team is comprised of 17 members from the Abington Police Department. This includes a Team Commander, Team Leader, Assistant Team Leader, and Training Coordinator. Defined as a "part-time" team, the members of the Tactical Unit are assigned to various divisions within the Department as part of their daily police duties. The primary purpose of the team is to provide enhanced capabilities for the safety and security of the citizens of Abington Township and surrounding municipalities. Although the team serves many purposes, it is utilized most often in high-risk operations and in the formal training of other police officers.

The Tactical Team trains monthly while the designated precision marksmen receive additional monthly training hours that are specific to their specialty role. The team trains with other tactical units, K9's, crisis negotiators, the Montgomery County Bomb Squad, Second Alarmers Rescue Squad, and federal agencies. Training is conducted at various locations throughout Pennsylvania and New Jersey; this includes Abington, and surrounding areas. Guided by the best practices as outlined by the National Tactical Officers Association (NTOA) and those of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) the team works cooperatively with other agencies to coordinate training and tactics to ensure a cohesive response in mutual aid situations. Training often consists of high-risk operations, negotiations, specialty munitions, team management and tactical firearms.

The Abington Township Tactical Team is most often utilized for high-risk operations which include barricaded gunman, high-risk warrant service, and civilian and officer rescue operations. The team participates in mutual-aid agreements with surrounding jurisdictions, providing an immediate, enhanced tactical response when necessary, with on-duty tactical officers from various teams in the surrounding area.

To be fiscally responsible the team participates and benefits from the federal government's 1033 program relating to surplus property. The 1033 program allows the department to obtain some of the most up-to-date and tactically relevant equipment that would be cost-prohibitive to otherwise purchase. This program enables the team to procure these assets from the government with little to no cost to the taxpayer.

The tactical team participates in community events such as the National Pre-Night Out, Citizens Police Academy, as well as other demonstration and community events. Team members take these opportunities to educate the public in the philosophy of the Tactical Team and the tenet that it is a "life-saving entity." It is the goal of the Abington Township Police Department that every incident ends peacefully and without injury to any civilians or police. The team is an important part of the community, providing an additional, layered response to incidents that require resources and tactics beyond the capabilities of those of the regular patrol officer. Should an incident arise that requires these specialties, the trained members of the tactical team are ready to serve at a moment's notice.

### **Patrol Rifle Program**

The Patrol Rifle Program originated in 2008 in response to national active shooter incidents of North Hollywood Bank Robbery and Columbine High School. Since then, it has grown to nearly all patrol personnel being qualified to carry patrol rifles. Officers undergo an initial qualification which consists of classroom and range activities. After initial qualification, officers will qualify on a semi-annual basis. Officers are provided with a review of APD Policies, including any changes to the program, and several qualification courses which incorporate the Patrol Rifle and their duty handgun.



The Department also maintains a cadre of Patrol Rifle Instructors and Armorers. Both the instructors and armorers complete their training from an outside agency in order to achieve certification. Patrol Rifle Instructors develop and conduct the semi-annual training and maintain the required training records for each qualified officer. Patrol Rifle Armorers conduct regular cleaning and inspections of the rifles.

In the case of an active shooter or other critical incident, it is duty of the on-duty Patrol Officer to respond to and contain the situation. The Patrol Rifle Program is and remains an essential tool for increasing the safety of our officers and the residents of Abington Township.

### **Honor Guard**

The Abington Township Police Department Honor Guard is comprised of sworn personnel from nearly every division within the department. The Honor Guard represents the Department and its members at various functions throughout the year. Some of these Honor Guard details include parades, DARE Graduations, flag and military honors, and police funerals for retired APD personnel as well as officers killed in the line of duty.

### **Abington Township Police Crisis Negotiation Unit**

The Abington Township Police Crisis Negotiation Unit is comprised of 10 sworn police officers, which includes one supervising lieutenant or sergeant. The unit's supervisor reports directly to the Patrol Division Commander. The mission of the Abington Township Police Department's Crisis Negotiation Unit is to provide competent, well-organized teams of negotiators that, when requested by operational commanders, can respond effectively to critical incidents. These incidents include, but are not limited to, hostage situations, barricaded suspects, high-risk suicide threats and high-risk warrant services. When the unit is deployed, the primary objective is to peacefully defuse a situation.

### **Training and Career Development**

The Abington Township Police Department is committed to developing and maintaining the highest level of professionalism for all of its officers, ensuring that they have the knowledge, skills and equipment necessary to perform their duties in a safe and efficient manner. Above all, they are committed to providing the best quality police service to the community with a clear focus on protecting the constitutional rights of all the township's citizens. This is accomplished through a rigorous and ongoing training program. In addition to the annual re-certification training mandated by Pennsylvania's Municipal Police Officers Education and Training Commission, each officer is required to attend periodic training.

Combining theory and classroom studies with practical tests and exercises, officers rotate through training sessions that include, but are not limited to: active-shooter response, firearms and weapons qualifications, legal updates on criminal case law, criminal procedures, search and seizure, biased based policing, ethics, victim's rights, use of force, civil liability, domestic violence, de-escalation and managing of aggressive behavior techniques, dealing with the

mentally ill, supervision, management, and leadership. Biased-based training is an essential, annual, training module that officers complete. The department utilizes members from civilian entities to provide formal comprehensive training on this subject. In addition, the department provides in-house training relating to social justice concepts to its officers on a regular basis.

### **Recruitment and Field Training Officer Program**

The Abington Township Police Department is committed to recruiting, testing and hiring high-quality candidates to become Abington Township Police Officers. There is a strong emphasis on minority recruitment to make the workforce reflective of the community. Several members from the police department are assigned to actively recruit candidates in the region. Often, the officers partner with churches, universities, and attend job fairs, to showcase what the Abington Township Police Department has to offer.

The Field Training Officer Program (FTO) is designed to facilitate a new officer's transition from police academy training to the that of a patrol officer. This is accomplished by providing advanced training under the direct supervision of an FTO to develop the knowledge and skills required of a permanent officer.

Field Training Officers (FTOs) are required to attend a basic forty-hour FTO class to prepare them for their new assignment. In addition, FTOs are expected to attend additional training in areas of teaching techniques, adult learning, officer safety, evaluation techniques, counseling, basic supervision, and leadership. This is accomplished through peer training at monthly meetings as periodic training from outside organizations. The Field Training Officer Program is an integral part of department, as this select group of officers is responsible for shaping the future, one recruit at a time.

The recruit is assigned to two FTOs. The recruit officer rides with an FTO for a period of 104 days. During this time, the FTOs are the recruit officer's "first-line supervisors," and they are responsible for evaluating the recruit's progress. After several formal evaluations and certification tests over the course of the one-year probationary period, a successful recruit will be promoted to a permanent Abington Township Police Department officer. The FTO program has been a critical part of the department's success, sustaining the department's culture of pride and professionalism. Many departments in the surrounding area have used a model of Abington's FTO program to enhance theirs.

### **Critical Incident Stress Management Team**

Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) is an adaptive, short-term psychological helping process that focuses solely on an immediate and identifiable problem. It can include pre-incident preparedness to acute crisis management to post-crisis follow-up. CISM is a comprehensive range of integrated services, procedures, and intervention strategies designed to mitigate the effects of exposure to a critical incident. Debriefing after a critical incident is a specific technique designed to assist others in dealing with the physical or psychological symptoms that are generally associated with trauma exposure. The Abington Township Police Department CISM

Team consist of both sworn and civilian personnel and are made up of ten volunteers from our department.

### **Sobriety Checkpoint Program**

The Abington Township Police Department participates in Pennsylvania's Sobriety Checkpoint Program. This program is funded by a grant from PennDOT; Abington serves as the grant administrator and coordinator for what is known as the Eastern Montgomery County DUI Task Force. The Task Force is comprised of eight municipalities: Abington, Cheltenham, Lower Moreland, Springfield, Upper Moreland, Upper Dublin, Whitmarsh, and Jenkintown. Abington has been involved in the Sobriety Checkpoint Program since its inception 24 years ago. The participating departments work collaboratively to address and enforce DUI laws within each jurisdiction.

Working as a team, the task force targets specific areas within each township on selected dates to conduct sobriety checkpoint operations. High visibility coupled with strict enforcement has made this program successful; contacting and educating thousands of drivers while arresting and prosecuting those who are suspected of driving under the influence. Publicity by media notification and targeted press conferences has also helped the program raise the level of awareness regarding impaired driving

### **Aggressive Driving & Buckle-Up Programs**

The Abington Township Police Department has been participating in the Aggressive Driving and Buckle-Up grant programs administered by Penn DOT. These programs have little to no impact to the township's budget, and they greatly enhance the department's ability to increase the safety and awareness for all motorists. As grant-funded projects, Abington Township receives varying amounts of funds as determined by PennDOT and authorized by the Board of Commissioners.

### **The Police Bicycle Unit**

The Abington Township Police Department maintains a Bicycle Patrol Unit that is comprised of trained Police Cyclists. The Bicycle Patrol Unit has been in existence in Abington since 1994. It affords officers an opportunity to connect with the public in ways that the traditional patrol car does not allow. Officers on bikes often find that they easily bridge all generational divides when it comes to positive contact with the public. The Bicycle Patrol Unit allows officers to conduct general patrol operations as well as engage in non-traditional patrol techniques, enabling them to access areas that are not readily available to officers operating traditional police vehicles. The police department routinely trains and replenishes the bike patrol program with new officers. This provides an opportunity for new officers to become part of a popular program that engages the community and builds relationships in positive ways early in their career.

### Detective Division

The Detective Division is responsible for follow up investigations involving misdemeanor and felony crimes, as well as any other major incident that would impact the safety and quality of life of Abington's citizens. The Detective Division also provides support services for the Patrol Division. The Department is dedicated to providing complete and thorough investigations while protecting victim rights. The primary objective of the Detective Division is to reduce the rate of crime by arresting those responsible for committing crimes in the community. The Detective Division is currently managed by the Detective Lieutenant. There are two squads, each containing a sergeant and three detectives. In addition, there are two Special Victims detectives and a Special Investigations Unit (SIU), consisting two detectives. The Detective Sergeants also supervise the Abington Township Police Officer assigned to the Montgomery County District Attorney's Office Narcotics Enforcement Team and the detective that is assigned full time to the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)'s drug diversion unit. The two School Resource Officers (SROs) also report to the detective division supervisors.

### **Crime Scene Processing**

The Detective Division maintains a mobile crime scene unit that has an extensive array of equipment to assist investigators in collecting evidence at crime scenes. There are two detectives who specialize in these skills and are extremely proficient with a wide range of required equipment and supplies. This provides detectives and prosecutors the ability to present evidence months and years after a crime that paints a picture and presents forensic evidence allowing judges and juries to better understand the complexities of the crimes and those who committed them.

### **Evidence Control**

The Detective Division is tasked with maintaining control and storage of the Police Department's evidence. Evidence control requires extremely stringent measures to ensure the integrity of the evidence. All evidence is carefully logged into the system and a complete "chain-of-custody" log is maintained, detailing who had control of each piece of evidence, where it was from, from the time the evidence was collected until it was presented in court. The evidence control system is audited on a regular basis, both internally and by the state of Pennsylvania. Random audits are also completed by an ATPD Commander who is not involved in or has access to, the evidence system. The evidence custodians are also responsible for proper disposition of all evidence; most of it is either returned to the owner, forfeited, or destroyed. The Detective Division must also store and maintain the integrity of all crime scene photos and the prescription drug "dropbox" which is available 24/7 to Abington residents to safely dispose of unwanted medication.

### **Intelligence Sharing and Task Forces**

Abington Detectives participate in and are members of numerous task forces and organizations, both on a regional and national level. The saying that "crime has no borders", has never been truer with the modern criminal's mobility and access to technology. These memberships ensure that detectives have access to the most recent crime intelligence and information sharing

mechanism, and are the source of information and intelligence for the whole department. Some of these organizations include:

- Middle Atlantic Great Lakes Organized Crime Law Enforcement Network (MAGLOCLLEN)
- International Crimes Against Children (ICAC)
- National Association of Bunco Investigators (NABI)
- International Association of Financial Crimes Investigators (IAFCI)
- PA Narcotics Officers Association (PNOA)

The Abington Township Police Department continues to be the primary agency and leader of the Eastern Montgomery County/Philadelphia Crime Sharing Group.

### **Special Investigations Unit**

The Special Investigations Unit (SIU) is the primary unit for all narcotics-related investigations. The SIU sergeant is the Abington Township Police Department coordinator for the Montgomery County District Attorney's Officer Drug Task Force. This is a task force of officers from throughout Montgomery County who work together to combat illegal drugs, focusing almost exclusively on the dealers. The SIU is committed to aggressively investigate and arrest those persons responsible for delivering heroin and other dangerous drugs to Abington residents. SIU also maintains, reports, and shares intelligence through a statewide heroin intelligence database. In addition to drug investigations, SIU handles most crimes in Abington Township which require the use of surveillance as an investigative tool.

### **Special Victims Unit**

The Special Victims Unit (SVU) consists of two detectives that specialize in handling juveniles and victims involved in sensitive cases. Examples of these cases include missing juveniles/runaways, child abuse, sexual assaults, bullying/cyber-bullying, and sexting cases. The SVU detectives work closely with the Montgomery County Child Advocacy Center (Mission Kids), juvenile probation, and the Office of Children and Youth, to ensure that juvenile matters are handled in a thorough, professional manner. The SVU Detectives serve on the Abington Youth Aid Panel and work with the Abington School District to educate youth on social media safety. The SVU detectives are also involved in many cases that are sensitive in nature and collaborate with Montgomery County services relating to domestic issues and human relations. A Special Victims Detective also serves on the Montgomery County Human Trafficking Task Force, and works with the Special Investigations Unit on the International Crimes against Children (ICAC) Task Force.

### **Administrative Division**

The Abington Township Police Department's Administrative Division is responsible for the fiscal management of the police department, management of the Traffic Safety Unit, the Records and

Operations Center, the Animal Control Officer, implementation of training programs, technology, and the police department facilities

### **Traffic Safety Unit**

The Traffic Safety Unit is focused on the safety of all motoring and pedestrian traffic within Abington Township. Among many other qualifications, this unit is trained in advanced crash investigation techniques. They are responsible for any major crash that occurs within the township and work on a team of crash investigators for with other Montgomery County municipalities for major crashes.

The Traffic Safety Unit addresses various traffic-related complaints from residents and motorists daily, conducting numerous traffic surveys (speed, volume, driving habits, etc...) each year. They coordinate all targeted enforcement activities in areas where needed and place speed detection and warning devices on roadways to better educate the motoring public and enhance safe driving practices. The Traffic Safety Unit is committed to improving safety for both pedestrian and motoring traffic in Abington Township.



The Abington Township Police Department t assists with the annual mock crash event at Abington High School, held to warn of the dangers of drunk driving.

### **Record and Operations Center (ROC)**

The Records and Operations Center (ROC) is a 24/7 operation which is the first point of contact for citizens who either come into our station or call the station. It is staffed by 8 full time and a pool of 12 part-time employees. The ROC is responsible for the management of records for the police department along with support for the patrol officers covering the street. Duties include auditing reports, data entry into multiple database systems, archiving the records management system, report distribution to the public and other agencies, security monitoring of holding cells and the township building, and dispatching during times of extremely high call volume in the county due to major events. The ROC is considered the information hub of the department, providing 24-hour service to the residents of the township in person, or via direct phone contact.

### **Animal Control**

The Abington Township Police Department provides various animal control services to its residents. Services provided vary greatly. Often sick or injured animals posing a risk to the public

are removed from resident's homes or properties. The Animal Control Officer works with the citizens of the township, assisting them with animal complaints or issues and striving to reach the best possible solution for everyone involved.