Fire Services Assessment

Montgomery Township

Montgomery County, PA

CPSM®

Center for Public Safety Management, LLC

September 28, 2026

What the Assessment Examined

Operations, Performance, Staffing, Risk, Infrastructure

- *Montgomery Township Fire Services' active volunteers and career firefighters are meeting the mission with limited operational depth.*
- *The primary near and midterm priorities should focus on turnout of apparatus and staff 24/7/365.*
- *35 recommendations provide a roadmap to enhance current services.*

Assessment Areas

- ✓ Community Risk and Growth
- ✓ Fire Demand
- ✓ Response Time Performance
- ✓ Operational Staffing
- ✓ Effective Response Force
- ✓ Recruitment of Vol. Firefighters
- ✓ Training, FF Safety,
- ✓ Facilities, Fleet
- ✓ Community Risk Reduction
- ✓ Organizational Climate

Montgomery Township Fire Services



All hazards response through a combination fire department.

- Career staff assigned to Battalion 1 Monday-Friday 7:00 am to 5:00 pm.
- Volunteer staff assigned primarily to Battalion 2.
  - Stipend on-premises staffing Sunday-Saturday 10:30 pm to 5:30 am.
- Two stations serving the Township.
  - No station is staffed around the clock.
- Heavy fire fleet supports current staffing model and Township needs.

Montgomery Township Fire Services

Community Risk Profile

- Estimated July 2025 Population: 26,210.
- Additional Growth and Development.
- Various Building Risks: High, Medium, and Low Hazard.
- Typical SE Pennsylvania Environmental Risk.
- Suburban-Urban Transportation Risks (Roads, Trails, Walkways).
  - 2024: 28 Motor Vehicle Accidents (FD Response).
  - 2025: 35 Motor Vehicle Accidents (FD Response).

Montgomery Township Fire Services

Fire and EMS Demand Profile

Call Type	Shift						Total
	Combination	Stipend	Volunteer				
			Vol. 1	Vol. 2	Vol. 3	Total	
Medical and other	68	12	3	15	19	37	117
MVA	24	0	0	6	5	11	35
EMS Subtotal	**92**	**12**	**3**	**21**	**24**	**48**	**152**
False alarm	173	71	10	80	78	168	412
Good intent	12	2	0	4	7	11	25
Hazard	49	12	4	25	20	49	110
Outside fire	7	1	1	3	5	9	17
Public service	20	3	3	12	6	21	44
Structure fire	6	2	1	2	5	8	16
Technical rescue	6	1	0	2	5	7	14
Fire Subtotal	**273**	**92**	**19**	**128**	**126**	**273**	**638**
Canceled	6	1	1	6	9	16	23
Mutual aid	110	20	9	28	23	60	190
Other Subtotal	**116**	**21**	**10**	**34**	**32**	**76**	**213**
Total	**481**	**125**	**32**	**183**	**182**	**397**	**1,003**
Total Percent	**48.0**	**12.5**	**3.2**	**18.2**	**18.1**	**39.6**	**100.0**

- 2.7 calls/day.
- Combination Shift - 48.0%.
- Vol. Stipend Shift - 12.5%.
- Vol. From-Home Shifts - 39.6%.
- There Were 2,741 Unit Runs.

Montgomery Township Fire Services



Current Montgomery Township Fire Services Staffing Model

Shift	Staffing Model	Days	Times	Total Hours
Combination	Career on Premise	Monday - Friday	7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.	2,610.0
Stipend	Volunteer on Premise	Every Day	10:00 p.m. – 5:30 a.m.	2,737.5
Volunteer 1	Volunteer from Home	Monday – Friday	5:30 a.m. – 7:00 a.m.	391.5
Volunteer 2	Volunteer from Home	Monday – Friday	5:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.	1,305.0
Volunteer 3	Volunteer from Home	Saturday – Sunday	5:30 a.m. – 10;00 p.m.	1,716.0
Total				**8,760.0**

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# of Calls Over a Two-Year Period:

- ✓ 2024: 926
- ✓ 2025: 1,003 + 8%

- *89.9 percent of the time no calls occurred.*
- *One call occurred 9.1 percent.*
- *Two or more calls occurred 1% of the time.*

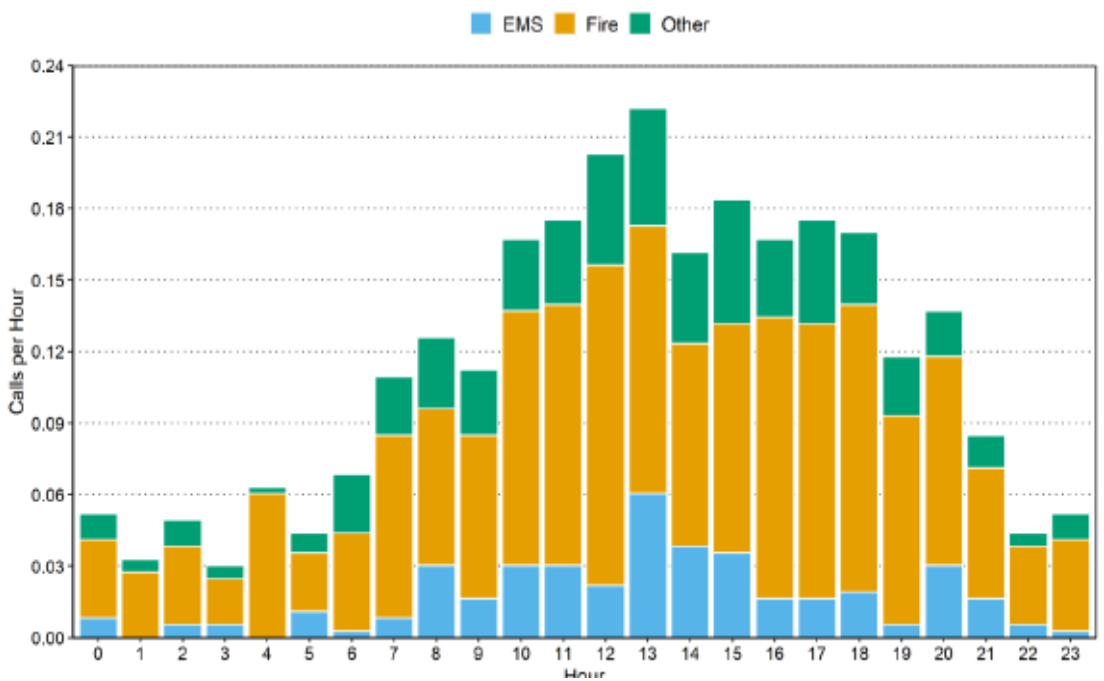
Call Breakdown by Shift: 2025

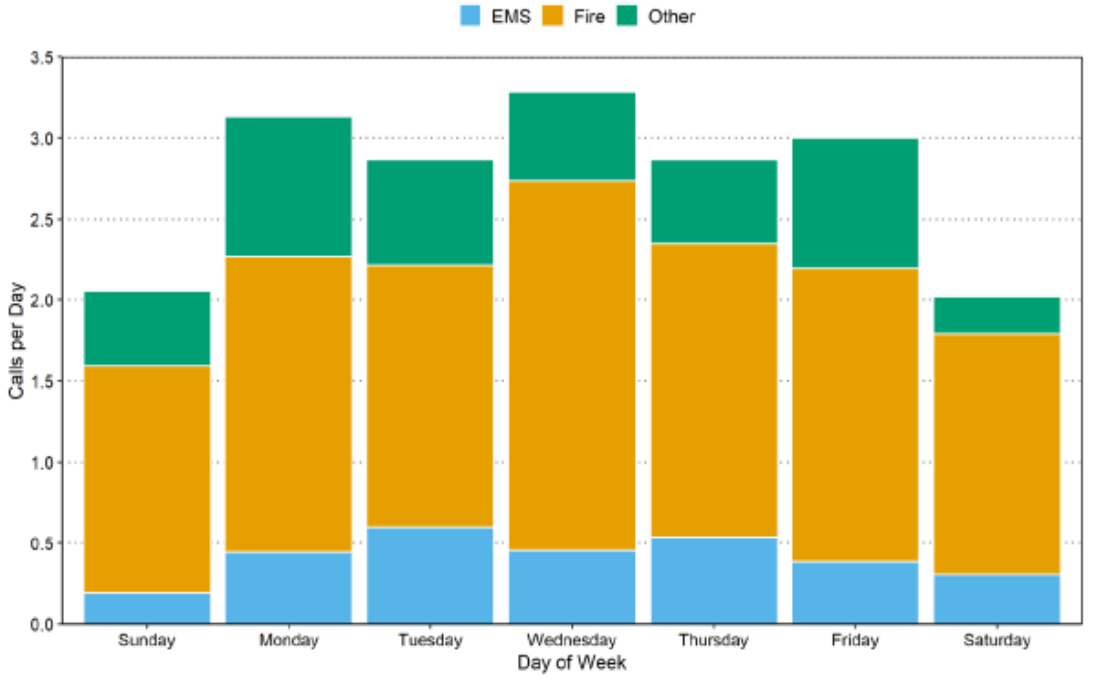
- ✓ 48% by Combination Shift
- ✓ 12.5% by Stipend Shift
- ✓ 39.6% by Volunteer Shift-Form Home response.

52.1% handled by volunteer response.

Montgomery Township Fire Services

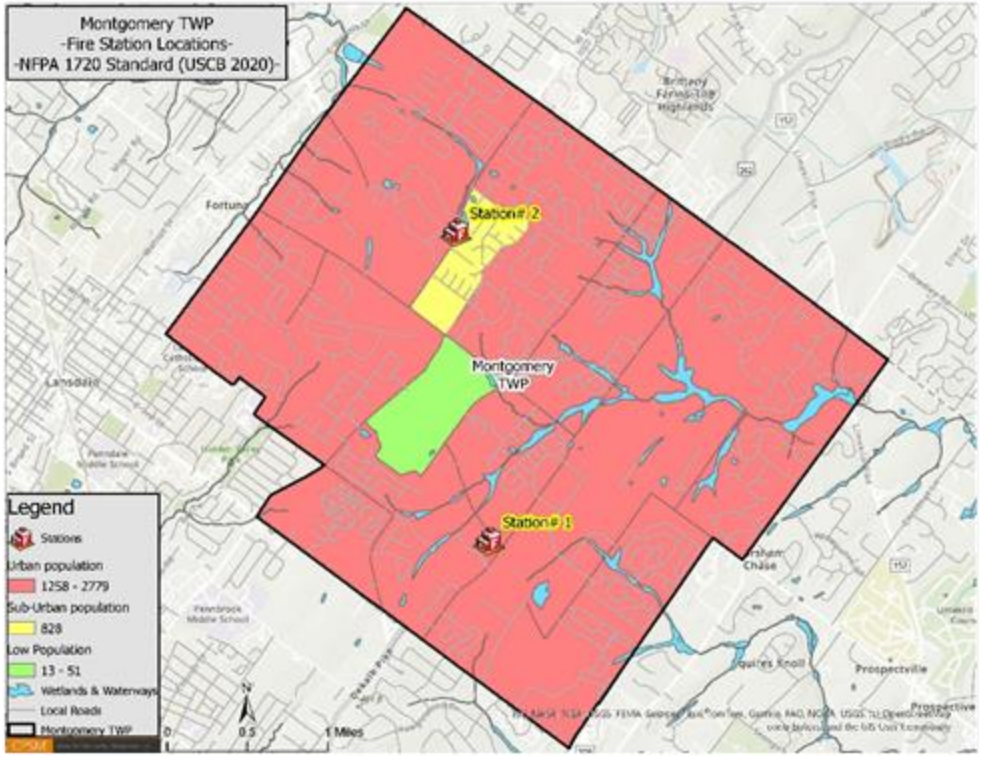
Temporal Assessment of Call Demand



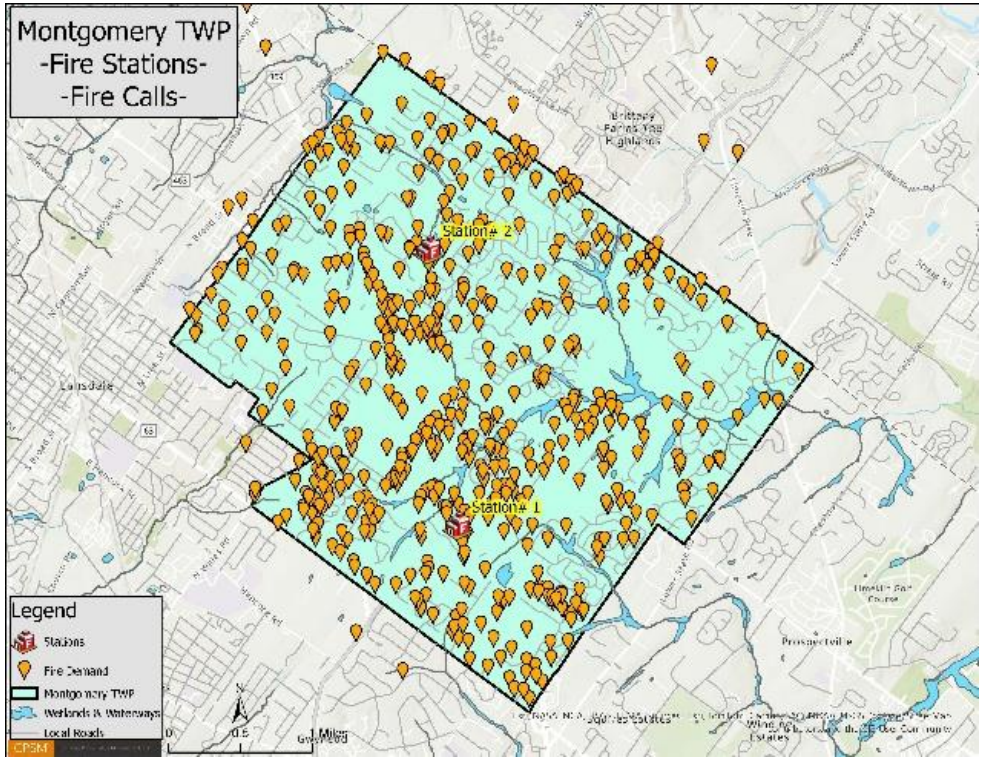


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Population Density (NFPA 1750 Standard)



Fire Call Responses



Montgomery Township Fire Services

NFPA 1750 Standard For Volunteer – Combination Departments

Demand Zone	Demographics	Minimum Staff to Respond	Response Time in Minutes- Assembling Staff	Meets Objective Percentile
Urban Area	>1000 people/mi	15	9	90%
Suburban Area	500-1000 people/mi	10	10	80%
Rural Area	<500 people/mi	6	14	80%
Remote Area	Travel Distance ≥ 8 miles	4	Directly dependent on travel distance	90%

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Response Times - Fire and EMS

Shift		90th Percentile Response Time				Calls
		Dispatch	Turnout	Travel	Total	
Combination		3.1	1.7	5.2	8.8	291
Stipend		2.5	4.3	5.8	10.5	84
Volunteer	Vol. 1	3.2	9.6	5.1	15.2	14
	Vol. 2	3.0	8.2	6.7	15.2	80
	Vol. 3	2.6	8.2	6.9	15.8	76
	Subtotal	**2.9**	**8.2**	**6.6**	**15.4**	**170**
Total		**3.0**	**6.1**	**5.8**	**12.7**	**545**

Fire services response
(Turnout Time + Travel time) by shift:

- Combination: 6.9 minutes: *In Station*
- Stipend: 10.1 minutes: *In Station*
- Vol.1: 14.7 minutes: *From Home*
- Vol.2: 14.9 minutes: *From Home*
- Vol.3: 15.1 minutes: *From Home*

Turnout Times (NFPA 1750 Standard When Station Staffed): 60 seconds for EMS 80 Seconds for Fire

Montgomery Township Fire Services

Operational Performance

NFPA 1750 Response Force for a Single-Family Dwelling

Demand Zone	Demographics	Minimum Staff to Respond	Response Time in Minutes- Assembling Staff	Meets Objective Percentile
Urban Area	>1000 people/mi	15	9	90%

37 Structure Fire Calls in 2024, 2025

- 12 occurred when career staff was working (6 did not have volunteer response).
  - 1 Call achieved 15 interior firefighters.
- 25 occurred during volunteer hours.
  - 1 response achieved 15 interior firefighters.
  - 2 responses had 14 interior firefighters.
  - The remaining 22 responses did not achieve 14 interior firefighters.

Montgomery Township Fire Services

Operational Staffing Recommendations: Near Term

Near Term

- Establish Consistent Baseline Staffing.
- Implement 24/7/365 career staffing at Battalion 1.
  - ✓ One response unit.

Increases FTE count.

Near Term

- Enhance volunteer stipend duty to staff a second response unit at Station 2.
  - ✓ 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm 7/days/week
  - ✓ Saturday & Sunday 7:00 am-6:00 pm
  - ✓ Maintain the 10:00 pm to 5:30 am stipend staffing

Increases stipend budget 50 hours per week-3 staff-150 stipend hours.

Transition to Mid and Longer Terms

Operational Staffing Recommendations: Mid -Long Terms

Long Term

- Continue utilizing volunteer - stipend personnel as supplemental staffing.
- Monitor workload and deployment demands annually.
- Develop defined staffing triggers for adding career personnel.
- Assess the need for additional suppression companies.
- Plan for relief and leave coverage as part of authorized staffing.
- Use a phased approach to future staffing. Do not let staffing lag behind Township expansion.

Mid Term

- Establish Battalion Chief-level operational supervision when the department transitions to a sustained two-station, 24/7/365 career staffing model and continuation of the volunteer stipend model during early evening and overnight hours.
  - ✓ One Battalion Chief per operational shift.

  Increases FTE count.

Mid Term

- Evaluate staffing:
  - ✓ Is the volunteer stipend program consistently staffed?
  - ✓ How effective is the 24/7/365 career staffing?

  Add 5/day/week career staff at Battalion 2 if needed (7:00 am-5:00 pm) **Or** add 7/day/week career staff at Battalion 2 (6:00 am-6:00 pm). **Increases FTE count.**

Or

- Add 24/7/365 career staff to staff a second response unit at Battalion 2 if volunteer stipend program cannot be staffed consistently.

  Increases FTE count.

  - ✓ Continue volunteer stipend program to staff a third response unit from either Station 1 or Station 2 as many hours as practical, with peak early evening and overnight times priority.

Montgomery Township Fire Services

- Volunteerism down across the country.

- Pennsylvania historically relied on volunteer firefighters to an extraordinary degree.

- In Pennsylvania, there were approximately 360,000 volunteer firefighters in the 1970's. That number decreased to 60,000 in CY 2000 and is now estimated to be 38,000 to 40,000.

- Why the decreases?
  - Economic and Workforce Pressures.
  - Increased Training and Certification Requirements.
  - Rising Call Volume and Service Complexity.
  - Demographic Shifts and Aging Membership.
  - Competing Demands and Reduced Civic Engagement.
  - Cultural and Organizational Expectations.

Montgomery Township Fire Services

CPSM Observations – Montgomery Volunteers

- Strong Organizational Culture And Training Environment.
  - Positive Organizational Culture and Improved Relationships
- Significant Time Commitment Expectations.
- Economic And Demographic Barriers.
  - Reliance on External Residency.
- Recruitment Efforts Are Active Yet Fragmented.
- Incentive Programs Provide Value But Have Limitations.

Montgomery Township Fire Services

CPSM Recommendations for Volunteer Recruitment and Retention

- Consider establishing a new full-time equivalent (FTE) position within the Township's Human Resources function, with at least 50 percent of the position's scheduled work hours specifically dedicated to the recruitment, engagement, and retention of volunteer firefighters.
- Develop a Formal Recruitment and Retention Strategy that identifies target populations, sets recruitment goals, and establishes measurable outcomes.

Expand Flexible Participation Models.

Targeted Recruitment Within the Community.

Enhance Incentive Programs Within Legal Constraints.

Strengthen Youth and Pipeline Programs

Improve Work-Life Balance and Manage Expectations.

Continue to Strengthen Organizational Culture.

Montgomery Township Fire Services

Additional Core Recommendations

- 41% of 2025 fire responses were false alarms with the greatest percentage of these calls fire alarm system activation with no fire or some.
  - CPSM recommends Montgomery Township consider adopting a comprehensive false-alarm ordinance to reduce recurring, preventable alarm responses.

- Continue established mutual-aid relationships with North Penn, Colmar, Fairmount-Lansdale, Wissahickon, Chalfont, Hilltown, Horsham, Upper Gwynedd, and other regional partners. These relationships should remain an important component of the Township's ability to manage incidents that exceed its normal staffing and resource capabilities.

- Public education initiatives should remain a priority, with outreach increasingly targeted to identified risk and vulnerable populations and common incident trends.

Montgomery Township Fire Services

Additional Core Recommendations

- Fire services (career and volunteers) work with the Township to enhance the protection, readiness, and long-term well-being of its personnel and move to adopt a more comprehensive, integrated approach to health, safety, and wellness.

- Maintain current training structure while reinforcing existing strengths.
  - Formalize career participation expectations in volunteer training.
  - Maintain and expand multi-company training opportunities.
  - Enhance consistency through light structural enhancements.

Montgomery Township Fire Services

Additional Core Recommendations

- Regarding facilities-Fire services and the Township continue to plan and budget for interior and exterior renovations, preventative maintenance, and health and safety improvements while incorporating contemporary fire station design standards.

- Fire services in conjunction with the Township continue to include in all departmental capital budgeting planning over the near, mid, and long terms, planning objectives focused on following the NFPA 1900 standard for heavy fire apparatus fleet replacement:
  - Fifteen years for frontline service
    - If the apparatus remans in a good mechanical state, 4-6 years of reserve life.
  - Not utilizing heavy fire apparatus once the apparatus reaches the 25-year age ceiling.

Montgomery Township Fire Services

Additional Core Recommendations

- Strengthen and formalize regional fire and EMS response framework by working with neighboring jurisdictions to expand automatic aid, first-alarm resource assignments, and regional Effective Response Force (ERF) deployment.

- Sustain support of a regional response model through regular multi-agency training, standardized incident command and communications practices, common tactical expectations, and exercises involving fireground operations, aerial operations, rapid intervention, firefighter rescue, and multi-company coordination.
  - Continue to incorporate all Township apparatus into regional response plans while maintaining reciprocal access to neighboring command, technical rescue, hazardous materials, and other specialized capabilities.