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Newsletter of the Township Emergency Management Association

August 2022

Latest News

Interested in Presenting a Workshop at the PSATS 2023 Conference?

PSATS recently issued its request for proposals for workshop presentations to be made at the 2023 Educational Conference & Exhibit Show, which will be held April 23-26, 2023, at the Hershey Lodge in Hershey. Workshops will be held on April 24 and 25 and will address a wide variety of topics, including all aspects of township administration, planning and zoning, **public safety and emergency management**, and public works.

Every year, nearly 4,000 elected and appointed township officials and employees, vendors, municipal service providers, and others register to attend this event, which also includes the largest municipal exhibit show in Pennsylvania. **Interested parties must submit workshop proposals to PSATS by September 12, 2022, through the following link: [Conference Workshop RFP](#).** All applicants will be notified by November 28, 2022, whether their proposals have been accepted. If you have any questions about the conference workshop RFP process, please contact Scott Coburn at 717-763-0930, ext. 171, or scoburn@psats.org.

PSATS 2022 Stormwater Conference Announced

Does your township's stormwater management program need some help? Do you have ongoing flooding problems? Do you want to learn more about the latest best practices for stormwater management? If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, then you (and the township's stormwater team) will want to attend the "2022 PSATS Stormwater Conference" nearest you!

To register, click on the appropriate link below for your preferred location. Attending a 2022 PSATS Stormwater Conference will up your township's stormwater game! Make sure to register early to reserve your spot to learn cost-effective ways and state-of-the-art practices for improving your overall stormwater management program from the best in the business. And note that we are offering the "Policy" track and "Technical" track on separate days at the PSATS Education Center if you are inclined to attend both tracks:

- [October 20 – Policy Track / DoubleTree Convention Center, Monroeville \(Allegheny County\)](#)
- [October 20 – Technical Track / DoubleTree Convention Center, Monroeville \(Allegheny County\)](#)
- [November 2 – Policy Track / PSATS Education Center, Enola, \(Cumberland County\)](#)

- [November 3 – Technical Track / PSATS Education Center, Enola, \(Cumberland County\)](#)
- [November 17 – Policy Track / DoubleTree Suites, Plymouth Meeting \(Montgomery County\)](#)
- [November 17 – Technical Track / DoubleTree Suites, Plymouth Meeting \(Montgomery County\)](#)

Each session starts at 9 a.m. and concludes by 3:15 p.m. Register before October 1 to get the “early bird” discounted fee of \$150; after that, registration is \$175 per person. Registration includes lunch, breaks, certificate of attendance, and all workshop presentation materials. If you are a member of a municipal stormwater operations staff, select the “Technical” track. If you have managerial/administrative/emergency planning responsibilities, select the “Policy” track.

FEMA Looks for Input on Easing the Application Process for Its Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is looking for ways to increase the number of fire departments that apply for its Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG). Last year, there were just over 8,000 fire departments nationally that submitted applications for funding. This seems like a lot, but it only represents about 1/3 of the fire departments nationwide.

For the first time in the history of the AFG program, FEMA is establishing listening sessions to hear from those departments that did not apply. If you know of a fire department that did not apply, FEMA hopes you will encourage them to join one of their upcoming listening sessions to share their reasons for not applying. FEMA is especially concerned if those reasons are:

- related to using the online systems such as SAM.gov or FEMA’s Grants Outcomes website;
- related to lack of resources (matching funds, grant-writing experience, unreliable internet access, staffing/capacity challenges); or
- language barriers or other socioeconomic challenges.

The schedule for these listening sessions is shown below. Please click on the link for the session you’d like to attend. Each session is expected to last one hour and will consist of a brief introduction, time to identify issues, a collaborative brainstorming session, and time for Q&As. If you are unable to attend one of these events, please send any comments you or your fire departments may have about the reasons you did not apply for AFG funds in 2021 to FEMA-AFG-Response@fema.dhs.gov.

Date	Start Time	Registration Link
8/1/2022	10 a.m.	Session 1
8/3/2022	Noon	Session 2
8/3/2022	5 p.m.	Session 3
8/6/2022	11 a.m.	Session 4
8/9/2022	10 a.m.	Session 5
8/9/2022	2 p.m.	Session 6
8/10/2022	Noon	Session 7
8/11/2022	5 p.m.	Session 8
8/11/2022	7 p.m.	Session 9

Reminder: Federal Flood Mitigation Funding Available

Pennsylvania will receive \$5 million through the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to support implementation of mitigation actions that will protect against future damage from natural disasters. Properties covered by a National Flood Insurance Program policy that have sustained repetitive losses due to flooding are eligible for the new Swift Current initiative. For more information, [click here](#).

Applications must be submitted by noon on **October 3, 2022**, using the [Mitigation eGrants Management System](#). Interested applicants are encouraged to contact Tom Hughes, the state hazard mitigation officer, at 717-651-2726 or thughes@pa.gov.

TEMA Q&A

Q: Is there a way to prevent our phones from being scammed by robocalls?

A: Yes. There are ways to use call blocking to stop illegal and unwanted calls from reaching your phone. A recent report released by the Federal Communications Commission found that many phone companies are internally improving their call blocking and labeling services, which result in billions of unwanted calls being blocked each year. The best protection you can take is to add your wireless devices and/or landline numbers to the National Do Not Call Registry, which prohibits telemarketers from calling your registered numbers. To put your phones on this registry, click [HERE](#).

Legal Update

Commonwealth Court to Decide Dispute Over Assets After VFD Merger

In *Keystone Valley Fire Dept. v. West Caln Twp.*, No. 816 C.D. 2021, the Commonwealth Court will review whether a township is entitled to receive the assets of a volunteer fire department that changed its bylaws and merged with another volunteer fire department after the township stopped providing funding. Click [here](#) to read more.

Legislative Report

Listed below are some new laws affecting townships and their emergency management responsibilities that were recently approved by the General Assembly and signed by the governor.

Underground storage tanks

Act 34 of 2022/HB 1780

Major provision:

- Amends the Storage Tank and Spill Prevention Act to extend the sunset dates for the Underground Storage Tank Environmental Cleanup Program and the Underground Storage Tank Pollution Prevention Program from June 30, 2022, to December 31, 2027.

Effective date: July 7, 2022.

Fire safety requirements for family child-care homes

Act 42 of 2022/SB 563

Major provisions:

- Amends the Fire and Panic Act to update the fire safety requirements for family child-care homes, including having interconnected smoke alarms on each floor and in the basement and a portable fire extinguisher in the kitchen and other cooking areas.
- Gives family child-care homes until September 5, 2023, or the expiration of its current license to comply, whichever is longer.

Effective date: September 6, 2022.

EMS Compact

Act 45 of 2022/SB 861

Major provision:

- Authorizes Pennsylvania to join the Emergency Medical Services Personnel Licensure Interstate Compact Act to make it easier for EMS personnel to move across state boundaries to perform their duties.

Effective date: July 7, 2022.

Fire Insurance Tax Fund and Municipal Pension Aid Fund

Act 53 of 2022/HB 1342

Major provisions:

- Changes the Tax Code to stabilize funding for fire relief and municipal pension aid by requiring insurance premium revenue from the 2% tax on gross premiums to be deposited into the General Fund.
- Requires that \$85 million or 8.5% of the insurance premium tax proceeds, whichever is greater, be transferred annually from the General Fund to the Fire Insurance Tax Fund by June 30.
- Requires that \$345 million or 38% of the insurance premium tax proceeds, whichever is greater, be transferred annually from the General Fund to the Municipal Pension Aid Fund by June 30.

Effective date: July 8, 2022.

Fiscal Code

Act 54 of 2022/HB 1421

Major provisions:

- Provides for the implementation of the 2022-2023 commonwealth budget, including appropriations of the state's share of the American Rescue Plan funds and creation of new grant programs.
- Creates a grant program of \$135 million for local law enforcement support. Municipalities with populations under 18,000 could receive up to \$1 million and those with populations between 18,000 and 55,000 up to \$5 million.
- Appropriates \$75 million to a Violence Intervention and Prevention Program.
- Allocates \$214.4 million to the Commonwealth Financing Authority for grants to municipalities and municipal authorities through the H2O Programs for drinking water, sanitary sewer, and storm sewer projects.
- Allocates \$105.6 million to the Commonwealth Financing Authority for the Small Water and Sewer Program, which provides grants for small sewer, storm sewer, and flood control projects.
- Provides for an increase in Medicaid reimbursement rates for ambulance transportation upon federal approval, including a loaded trip fee of \$325 for basic life support, \$400 per loaded trip for advanced life support, and not less than \$4 per mile for each loaded mile beyond 20.
- Appropriates funds to the Office of the State Fire Commissioner for a statewide recruitment and retention coordinator and regional technical advisors to develop and implement recruitment and retention training programs and provide technical assistance to local governments and fire organizations.

Note: This act addresses several PSATS resolutions.

Effective date: July 11, 2022.

Floodplain management

Act 65 of 2022/HB 1598

Major provisions:

- Amends the Flood Plain Management Act to transfer administration and oversight of the program from the state Department of Community and Economic Development to the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA).
- Includes review and approval of municipal flood plain management ordinances.
- Completes the transfer of responsibilities to PEMA that was incorporated into the Administrative Code in 2021.

Effective date: September 9, 2022.

Minimum staffing for EMS providers

Act 72 of 2022/HB 2097

Major provisions:

- Sets the minimum staffing at the time of transport for a Basic Life Support ambulance as an emergency medical services (EMS) vehicle operator and an EMS provider that is certified as an emergency medical technician or above, who is required to attend to the patient at the scene and during transport.
- Provides for this act to expire April 29, 2027.

Effective date: September 9, 2022.

Fireworks

Act 74 of 2022/HB 2157

Major provisions:

- Codifies the Fireworks Law by moving its provisions from the Tax Reform Code to Title 3 (Agriculture) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes and makes the following changes to the law.
- Requires professional displays of fireworks to post bonds of at least \$1 million with the municipality permitting the display.
- Authorizes municipalities to enact conditions, prohibitions, and limitations on the use and sale of consumer fireworks that do not conflict with state law, including requiring a permit, charging a reasonable fee for the use of consumer fireworks, and restricting the use of consumer fireworks between 10 p.m. and 10 a.m. except on the days noted below.
- Prohibits municipalities from restricting, regulating, or requiring a permit for the use of fireworks on July 2, 3, and 4 and December 31 when consumer fireworks may be used until 1 a.m. the following day; when July 4 falls on a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday, consumer fireworks may be used until 1 a.m. on the immediately preceding and following Friday and Saturday; and on Memorial Day weekend and Labor Day weekend.
- Authorizes municipalities to prohibit the use of consumer fireworks within their borders without restriction if it is not possible to use these devices without being within 150 feet of a building or vehicle.
- Clarifies that consumer fireworks may not be used on private or public property, including streets, parking lots, sidewalks, and parks, without the express permission of the person or entity that controls the property.
- Prohibits consumer fireworks from being directed at another person and clarifies that consumer fireworks may not be used within 150 feet of a building or vehicle, regardless of whether the building or vehicle is owned by the consumer fireworks user.
- Defines animal housing facility as a roofed structure or facility for livestock or poultry, and requires a consumer fireworks user to notify the livestock owner in writing within 72 hours if consumer fireworks will be used within 150 to 300 feet of such a facility or a fenced area designed to confine livestock.
- Directs the 12% consumer fireworks tax to be allocated as follows:
 - \$1.5 million to the Emergency Medical Services Grant Program;
 - \$250,000 to a special account for developing and delivering online training programs for firefighters;
 - \$1 million for loan forgiveness and tuition assistance to active volunteer firefighters and volunteer emergency medical services providers;
 - \$1 million for training emergency medical services personnel;
 - \$500,000 for emergency services training center capital grants;
 - \$500,000 for career fire department capital grants;
 - \$250,000 for a public safety campaign on fireworks;
 - \$500,000 to reimburse a certified bomb squad for the removal, storage, and destruction of seized fireworks; and
 - the remaining funds to be divided between the Fire Company Grants and Emergency Medical Services Grants. *(Note: Currently, only one-sixth of these funds or up to \$2 million is used for Emergency Medical Services Grants and online training for volunteer firefighters.)*
- Increases fines for fireworks used in violation of state law from \$100 to up to \$500 for a first offense and up to \$1,000 for a subsequent offense within three years of a prior conviction.

Note: Act 74 addresses several PSATS resolutions.

Effective date: September 9, 2022.

Upcoming PSATS Educational Opportunities

Calling All Subject Matter Experts!

PSATS continues to host numerous in-person and virtual educational events targeted to municipal officials, employees, and other professional and volunteer stakeholders as detailed below. If you are interested in sharing your expertise for an in-person or virtual presentation on any topic of interest to our audience, please contact Education Director Scott Coburn at scoburn@psats.org.

In-person Classes

Are You Ready for Summer Blackouts? Other Emergencies?

Register your emergency management team so that you can all attend the upcoming **TEMA Fall Tabletop Exercise (TTX) Forum** nearest you! Click on the appropriate link below to register and have your team join us for dynamic and interactive discussions designed to help improve your emergency preparedness capabilities.

- [Sept. 15 — TEMA TTX West — Westmoreland County](#)
- [Sept. 29 — TEMA TTX Central — Cumberland County](#)
- [Oct. 13 — TEMA TTX East — Montgomery County](#)

These upcoming TEMA TTXs will cover a range of “What would/should you do?” scenarios that will help you assess your organization’s and residents’ level of preparedness. These tabletop activities are intended to be low-stress conversation starters to lead to discussions, as the name implies, around your meeting table. Disasters and incidents are always around the corner. Having your emergency management team attend a TEMA TTX will help you better prepare for whatever disaster comes your way.

[Flagger Training](#)

PSATS is offering in-person, instructor-led flagger training for individuals who have flagging responsibilities on public roads. Others who would benefit from this course include, especially during an emergency, township road crews and public works departments, utility companies working on low-volume roads, local law enforcement personnel, tow-truck drivers, and township managers and elected officials (to understand the importance, and for budgeting purposes). This course meets the PennDOT Publication 408 flagger training requirements. Click on “Flagger Training” above to see the current list of classes.

PSATS PowerPass-Eligible Webinars

[Webinar - FEMA Grant Funding Opportunities - 8/3/22](#)

Tom Hughes, PEMA’s State Hazard Mitigation Officer, will discuss numerous funding opportunities through FEMA, including the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program, which assists with hazard mitigation projects. He will also address grants available through the Flood Mitigation Assistance program, which can be used for projects that reduce or eliminate the risk of repetitive flood damage to buildings insured by the National Flood Insurance Program.

[Webinar - Making Intermunicipal Stormwater Management Work for You - 8/25/22](#)

Municipal stormwater regulations can put pressure on limited administrative and financial resources. This webinar will provide an overview of intermunicipal collaborative arrangements that have been used in Pennsylvania and have yielded efficiencies and cost savings. Pros and cons of each will be discussed in terms of initial investment, cost of compliance, co-benefits, and suitability for different situations.

[Webinar - Stormwater Management Practices for Residential Property Owners - 9/28/22](#)

In this webinar, learn how your township can help its residents (and itself) with better stormwater management practices on residential properties. This presentation will discuss small scale practices designed to minimize runoff from residential properties including, rain gardens, rain barrels and cisterns, pervious pavement, lawn to natural area conversions, tree planting, and sustainable turf care.

This monthly newsletter for members of the Township Emergency Management Association focuses on news and matters of interest to municipal emergency management personnel and provides details on upcoming training opportunities. To access previous editions, log onto www.psats.org and look under the "Newsroom" tab. Email comments and suggestions to TEMA Coordinator James Wheeler at jwheeler@psats.org.



Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors

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