

BERN TOWNSHIP



in the news.....

FALL 2017

Berks Alert

The Berks County Department of Emergency Services is pleased to announce the roll out of a new upgraded Berks Alert mass notification system.

During serious emergencies, public safety officials will release information by using the BERKS ALERT program. The message will then be delivered to the devices that are registered in the system. While the most important messaging, such as that related to disaster response actions, will be sent to any device registered, individuals participating in the system may also “opt-in” to certain other categories of which they desire notifications. These categories include severe weather watches, amber alerts, road closures and general community news.

When an individual registers for this service, they will be prompted to enter their home address and the address of other locations of interest (such as a child’s day care center, school, or a place of business). Alerts that are appropriate to these locations of interest will then be sent to the subscriber’s registered device(s).

Get local alerts about emergencies, severe weather and road closures on your cell phone or email. When situations arise in Berks County that may affect you and your family, Berks Alert lets local officials notify you quickly.

To register – go to berksdes.com, click on the Berks County icon with Berks Alert written inside, select register now and follow the subscriber registration instructions provided for you on the Berks Alert page.

Should you have any questions or need assistance registering, please contact the Berks Alert team at berksalert@countyofberks.com or by calling 610-374-4800.

If you signed up for this program a few years prior, you will need to do so again. ❖

Important! Property Maintenance

Bern Township enforces the International Property Maintenance Code 2003 edition. Chapter 3 General Requirements of this Code includes regulations for exterior areas.

The Bern Township Code has an amendment to this section. The amendment, Section 301.2.1 Properties abutting public right-of-way states “Where properties abut a public right-of-way (a.k.a. street), the abutting property owner shall be responsible for the maintenance of the area between their property line and the cartway (edge of the road), including the curb, the sidewalk and grass areas between the curb and the property line.

In country settings where there are no curbs, property owners are responsible for the maintenance of their property to the edge of the cartway (paved road).

You might wonder why we have a brush cutting machine. Sometimes we wonder about that as well. While we will continue to provide the brush cutting service, please know the first responsibility of maintenance of vegetation along the edge of the roadways falls to the property owner. ❖

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BERN TOWNSHIP

1069 Old Bernville Road
Reading, PA 19605

Hours: Mon-Thur 8:30 am to 4:30 pm
Fri - 8:30 am to 12 pm
Phone: (610) 926-2267
Fax: (610) 926-9028
www.berntownship.org

TOWNSHIP SUPERVISORS

Lucille M. Brady	610-376-5039
James Dailey	610-926-1941
Irene Reed	610-926-7621
Jeff Thompson	610-371-9411
Boyd C. Wagner	610-372-2121

SUPERVISORS MEETING

1st Tuesday of the Month - 7:00 pm

Township Staff

Brian Potts	Manager
Diane DeJesus	Secretary / Treasurer
Wesley Waugh	Chief of Police
Steve Edwards	Assistant Road Foreman

Township Contacts

LTL Consultants 610-987-9290	Building Inspector / Zoning Officer
Lori Hozza 610-916-9919	Municipal Authority
Jamie Neuin 610-916-8955	Tax Collector
Berks Envirotech 610-375-7640	Sewage Officer
Kevin Hinkle For emergencies call 911	Emergency Management

Non-Emergency for Police, Fire, Rescue & Medical
610-655-4911

Township Monthly Meetings

Planning Commission	2nd Tuesday at 7:30 pm
Municipal Authority	4th Wednesday at 7:00 pm
Solid Waste Commission	2nd Wednesday bi- annually at 7:00 pm
Zoning Hearing Board	Meeting dates as needed
Recreation Board	Meeting dates as needed

POLLING PLACES

1st Precinct	Bern Township Municipal Building
2nd Precinct	Ontelaunee Grange Hall
3rd Precinct	Greenfields Fire Co. Social Hall

TRASH COLLECTION INFO

Bern Township Trash Collection Districts:

Greenfields / Riveredge Acres

Orchard Hill Area

(West Leesport & Rick Road)

Bern Manor Area

(Prison Road, Kercher & Mull Ave, Burdan Drive)

Willows Area

(Cathy & Christina Drive, Almark Way)

Northwest Area

(Ziegler, Park Roads, Brossman Court)

About Bern Trash Collections:

*Every week - six (6) 35 gallon bags or cans per household, one (1) bulk item per week allowed
NO items containing electronics, Freon, automotive tires, hazardous waste or construction material*

Collection Dates:

Sept. 1, 9, 15, 22, 29; Oct. 6, 13, 20, 27;

Nov. 3, 10, 17, 25; Dec. 1, 8, 15, 22, 30;

Jan. 6, 12, 19, 26; Feb. 2, 9, 16, 23

Mar. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30; Apr. 6, 13, 20, 27

*Visit www.berntownship.org to view the
2017 trash flyer*

**CALL 610-926-2267 the day of collection to
report a missed trash collection - messages
can be left on the answering machine until
midnight**

RECYCLING COLLECTION INFO

About Bern Recycling Collections:

Every other week

DO NOT USE PLASTIC BAGS!

*Place clear, brown and green glass containers,
plastic, tin, Bi-metal and aluminum cans in
recycling container. Place newspapers in
paper bags or bundle. Cut cardboard and place
in paper bags or bundle. **Items NOT collected
for recycling:** paint cans, tires, batteries,
construction material or large appliances.*

Collection Dates:

Sept. 14, 28; Oct. 12, 26; Nov. 9, 24; Dec. 7, 21;

Jan. 5, 18; Feb. 1, 15; Mar 1, 15, 29; Apr 12, 26

*Visit www.berntownship.org to view the
2017 recycling flyer*

**CALL 610-926-2267 the day of collection to
report a missed recycling collection -
messages can be left on the answering
machine until midnight**

**Visit www.berntownship.org to view the 2017
leaf and yard waste flyer**

Township Information

Tree Trimming

The Bern Township Road Department will again be trimming trees that encroach the roadways this winter. This is done to prevent damage to higher vehicles, such as School Buses, Fire Trucks, Garbage Trucks and Road Department Trucks that are plowing snow.

When branches encroach the roadways, higher vehicles have a tendency to drive in the middle of the road to avoid hitting the branches. This causes an unsafe situation for oncoming traffic and head-on collisions.

We realize that some residents do not like when their trees are trimmed back to the edge of the road. You are welcomed to cut your trees from the roadway yourself, especially if you want them to be shaped in a certain fashion. Please remember, if your trees overhang into the roadway, they are candidates to be cut back to the edge of the road. ❖

Quality of Life

The quality of our environment where we live is important to all of us. We all like to come home after work to a well looking community that is warm and friendly. This is only possible if we respect and be kind to our neighbors and keep our properties looking as nice as we can make them. If we all make an effort at this, Bern Township will remain beautiful! ❖

Prepare Mailboxes for Winter

Mailboxes can be damaged by snow thrown from snow plows unless they are prepared for winter. If a mailbox is damaged by snow and ice thrown by the plow, the repairs for the damage is the responsibility of the resident. Here are some tips on how you can reduce mailbox damage:

- Place a 6 to 8 inch piece of reflective tape on the mailbox to help snow plow operators see it at night.
- Remove snow from around the mailbox but do not throw it back onto the road.
- Consider repositioning the mailbox slightly off the road but still within reach of the postal carrier.
- Consider the installation of a cantilevered mailbox support that will swing a mailbox out of harm's way (free plans are available on PennDOT's website, www.dot.state.pa.us). Contact the Post Office for more information on how to correctly position a mailbox. ❖



COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL DISPOSAL SERVICE

"Your Cans Are In Good Hands"

Lawley's

Disposal & Container Service, Inc.

P.O. Box 778
Leesport, PA 19533

(610) 916-599

Stormwater Tips Reminder

When it rains, stormwater runoff carries pollutants from EVERYONE'S rooftop, lawns, driveways, sidewalks, streets and parking lots into nearby streams. Follow these simple tips for cleaner streams and a healthier environment:

- Keep lawn fertilizer and chemicals off of driveways and sidewalks.
- Clean up after your pet waste.
- Don't wash down your driveway and sidewalk – **SWEEP IT!**
- Don't pour household waste chemicals onto the ground or in old wells – dispose of properly.
- Wash cars on gravel or grassed areas.
- Fix oil and radiator leaks on your car and tractor.
- Don't litter – put trash in a trash can.
- Don't put oil or trash in storm drains – storm drains empty into streams!
- Don't put grass cuttings or leaves in street gutters – mulch it.
- NEVER put trash, tires or old appliances in a stream.

Plant a tree or shrub – they soak up stormwater. ❖

Remember to Vote!

Election Day is fast approaching. Please remember to cast your vote on Tuesday, November 7th. Voting locations in Bern Township are noted on Page 2 of this newsletter. ❖

IT PAYS TO RECYCLE !

Bern Township Police

The Police Chief's Quick Quiz

Okay, let's have a little fun with this. The answers may be found on page 6.

1. You are travelling on State Route 183 approaching the intersection with West Leesport Road. The intersection is controlled by a traffic signal which is not operating because of a power failure. What should you do?
 - A. Since you are on the main highway, you should continue through the intersection.
 - B. You should slow down in case someone is coming to the intersection on the other highway.
 - C. You should treat the intersection as if it was a four-way stop intersection.
 - D. You should do A and B above.
2. The states of Washington, Colorado, California, Maine, Massachusetts and Nevada have voted on and approved measures to legalize recreational use of marijuana. It is now completely legal to possess and use small amounts of marijuana in those states.
 - A. True
 - B. False
3. The First Amendment to the United States Constitution provides that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." Therefore, police are not allowed to control or limit First Amendment protected protest activities.
 - A. True
 - B. False
4. You are doing a major house cleaning, and have some items that you are going to discard. Which of the following require special handling by law?
 - A. Refrigerators
 - B. Computers
 - C. Televisions
 - D. All of the above

5. You are selling your car to a private individual. He wants you to meet him at a local coffee shop where he will give you a check and you will sign the title over to him. Is this acceptable?
 - A. Any meeting place is acceptable as long as the title is signed on the back.
 - B. You must go to a car dealership to do the transfer.
 - C. The title must be signed in the presence of a notary public or other transfer agent.
 - D. Answers B and C above.

The answers may be found on Page 6. ❖

Car Smarts

Protect your car and yourself. The Bern Township Police remind everyone to keep their cars locked. More than 90% of thefts from cars have been committed because the vehicle was left unlocked. If you leave your vehicle unlocked overnight it is an easy target for someone to enter and take your valuables. Even if you lock your vehicle but leave valuables in plain sight a person may break a window to steal the items.

The Bern Township Police urge everyone to lock their vehicles at all times and place any valuables in your trunk or take them inside your home. This will prevent any thefts and criminal mischief to your vehicles and hopefully deter criminals from coming into our community. By doing this, you will not only be safe guarding your property, but your neighbors as well. As always, if you see suspicious persons or vehicles in your neighborhood obtain all the information that you can on the people or vehicles and please call the dispatch center at 610-655-4911, or dial 911 if a crime is in progress. ❖

Berks County Government Contacts

County Services Building	610-478-6100
Office of Aging	610-478-6500
Tax Assessment Board	610-478-6262
Recorder of Deeds	610-478-3380
Register of Wills	610-478-6600
Tax Claim Bureau	610-478-6625
Veterans Affairs	610-378-5601
Voter Registration	610-478-6490
PA Game Commission	610-926-3136
Berks Heim	610-376-4841
Schuylkill Valley Library	610-926-1555

Bern Township Police

Hit & Run Car Accidents

Every month in the Bern Township Police Department, motor vehicle crash reports undergo a thorough analysis of crash locations and causal factors. The results of this analysis is distributed to the department's patrol officers to be used as a predicate for the next month's traffic enforcement activities. In this fashion, officers perform speed enforcement and other activities in locations that are specifically targeted to reduce crashes and increase traffic safety in the township. While performing the monthly crash analysis, I have noticed that hardly a month goes by without at least one hit-and-run motor vehicle collision in Bern Township. It is probably helpful for everyone to periodically review what is legally required in the event that a person is involved in a crash.

To start off, the provisions of the Vehicle Code that apply to motor vehicle accidents apply to "highways and trafficways throughout the Commonwealth" (75 Pa.C.S. §3741). The term highways includes streets and "the entire width...of every way publicly maintained" that are open for vehicular travel. Trafficways are privately-maintained locations that are open to the public for vehicular travel as a matter of right or custom (75 Pa.C.S. §102).

An accident is reportable and police must be contacted immediately if the crash results in injury or death to any person, or if a vehicle is damaged to the extent that it cannot be driven from the scene under its own power without further damage to the vehicle, other traffic elements, or the roadway (75 Pa.C.S. §3746). Police are required to investigate reportable accidents. Not all police departments respond to accidents that do not meet the reportable crash criteria. It is still the policy of the Bern Township Police Department to respond and investigate non-reportable crashes that are timely reported to police.

A person involved in an accident resulting in injury, death, damage to a driven vehicle, or damage to attended property, has a duty to give information and render aid (75 Pa.C.S. §3744). The person must provide his or her name, address, and registration number of the vehicle involved. If asked, the person must also exhibit his or her driver's license and financial responsibility information (insurance card) to the other involved parties and to the police. One other fine point in the law – "exhibit" does not just mean "show." The definition of "exhibit" in the Vehicle Code is "Surrender of a document into the

temporary possession of a person for the purpose of examining the document" (75 Pa.C.S. §102), allowing the other party to copy down the information.

A person involved in an accident resulting in damage to an unattended vehicle or property must stop at the scene or as close to it as possible, and

- Notify the owner of the damaged vehicle or property; OR
- Leave a written notice with the striking operator's name, address, financial responsibility (insurance) information, and striking vehicle registration number, **AND** notify the police department.

Of the various types of incidents handled by the police department, few make me shake my head in disgust as quickly as hit-and-run crashes. Stopping at the scene of a crash is a test in Accountability 101 – anybody can make a mistake, but when you do, admit it. "I was late for work." "I didn't know what to do." Unfortunately, you just damaged the car of someone who also went to work, possibly for years, to pay for that car. Or maybe a teen who worked and saved for months to put that new paint job on a car that he or she has been working hard to fix up. The car is an older model and he or she can't afford to carry comprehensive coverage on it. You hit it. It's your fault. Now you are just going to drive away? What a great way to reward that hard-working young person for his or her initiative.

Sadly, by the time an investigation is complete, police officers usually ascertain why a hit-and-run operator left the scene. Most often, the use of an intoxicant or drug is suspected, and the operator needed time to sober up or come down from a high before speaking with police in order to avoid more severe charges. In some cases, the driver did not have insurance coverage, which is an offense regardless of the other circumstances of the crash. Sometimes the driver is not properly licensed, and, in this case, involvement in an accident resulting in death or bodily injury to any other person is an indictable offense. Other times, people forget their driver training and are not sure about the legal requirement as to what they must do after a crash.

On the bright side, the public has been very helpful in assisting the police in identifying hit-and-run operators. In a recent case, a motorist witnessed a hit-and-run to unattended property, followed

(Continued on Page 7)

Trash & Recycling

Trash - Recycling Collections

Please visit the Bern Township website at www.berntownship.org to get information on trash and recycling district collections. Click on "2017 Recycling Dates" on the left hand menu near the bottom of our home page. On the next screen click on the "Township-wide Recycling Flier". On the next screen you can scroll through the household recycling collection flyer, trash district collection flyer and the leaf and yard waste flyer.

All collection dates for 2017 are listed on the flyers for both trash and recycling. **Please remember, trash or recycling collection is delayed one day if a National Holiday falls in the week of collection.** The collection dates on the flyers already reflect those one day delays.

Please call 610-926-2267 on the day of collection to report a missed recycling or trash collection - messages can be left on the voice mail until midnight - so we can get the hauler to come back for your material if necessary.

Please remember that electronics can not be put out for trash collection. They must be recycled. You can take your old electronics to the county recycling center on Hilltop Road.

We thank you for your cooperation. ❖

Fall Curbside Collection Schedule

The residential curbside collection of leaf and yard waste begins on Monday, October 23 and continues until Thursday, December 21. Be prepared and plan ahead so that you do not miss the opportunity to have your material collected.

Please follow these helpful tips:

Do not place branches, sticks or other yard waste in your leaf piles.

- STICKS, IN LEAF PILES, WILL NOT BE COLLECTED.
- Place leaves in one pile at the curb, away from mailboxes and flower beds OR place leaves in biodegradable bags at the curb.
- Garden waste must be placed in biodegradable bags.
- Plastic bags will not be collected.
- Branches and sticks are to be bundled. Bundles should not exceed 4 feet in length and not exceed 40 pounds.
- Place your material at the curb or street line **before** the scheduled collection week for your area.

You do not need to call the township to request collections in the fall. The Road Department will make collections per the following pre-set schedule:

Greenfields Precinct collections:

October 23 thru October 27

November 20 thru November 22

December 18 thru December 21

Schuylkill Precinct collections:

October 30 thru November 3

November 27 thru December 1

Grange Precinct collections:

November 6 thru November 10

December 4 thru December 8

County Precinct collections:

November 13 thru November 17

December 11 thru December 15

DO NOT put your material out after the Road Department has been past your house during the collection week. The Road Department **WILL MAKE** one sweep thru each precinct during the week scheduled. They **WILL ONLY** return to your area, before the next scheduled week, if they get caught up in other areas.

They **WILL NOT** return after the last week scheduled for each area. **PLEASE PLAN ACCORDINGLY!**

If you are not sure which precinct you are located in, please refer to the recycling flyer that was sent out at the beginning of this year. If you cannot find it, visit our website, stop by the township building to get another copy or call the township to ask. ❖

Quick Quiz Answers

Question 1: The correct answer is C. Motorist facing an unlighted signal are required to stop in the same manner as at a stop sign, and then proceed subject to the same rules that apply after stopping at a stop sign. The reference in Pennsylvania law is 75 Pa.C.S. §3112(c)(2) which can be searched on the Internet if you wish to read the actual law.

Question 2: The correct answer is False. Marijuana remains a Schedule I controlled substance under federal law, **making it illegal everywhere in the United States.** Individual states that claim to have "legalized" marijuana have actually eliminated state laws criminalizing the drug which leaves state and local police with no law to enforce. These

Bern Township Police

state actions do not negate provisions of federal law. The United States Department of Justice and its various law enforcement agencies can initiate prosecutions if the department chooses to do so.

Question 3: The correct answer is False. The First Amendment contains protections that are essential freedoms for all of us. However, there are limits – the most famous example being the saying that you can't yell "fire" in a crowded theater (Oliver Wendell Holmes, *Schenck v. United States*, 1919). In the case of First Amendment protected protest activities, the protestors control their message but police and government officials may impose reasonable restrictions on the time, place, and manner of the assembly.

Question 4: The correct answer is D, all of the above. Discarded refrigerators make excellent spaceships or submarines for children at play. The problem is that, once a child is inside and he or she closes the spaceship or submarine hatch (the refrigerator door), it cannot always be reopened from the inside. This creates a serious suffocation hazard. When a refrigerator with a capacity of 1½ cubic feet or more is discarded in any place accessible to children, Pennsylvania criminal law requires that the refrigerator door be removed.

Computers, monitors, and similar electronic devices may not be discarded in trash. Instead, these devices are required to be recycled. Additional information is available online at <http://www.dep.pa.gov/business/land/waste/recycling/electronics/pages/default.aspx>, which is the web site of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

Flat screen televisions require recycling in the same manner as computers. Older model televisions that have a picture tube require special efforts. A vacuum exists inside the picture tube. Due to the vacuum and the glass components of a cathode ray tube, the dangers presented to eyesight and hearing, and the likelihood of flying glass if an implosion occurs, televisions with picture tubes may not be discarded or abandoned in any place accessible to the public until the picture tube has been neutralized to eliminate the danger of implosion. The County of Berks operates an electronic waste recycling center that is open three mornings per week and is free to county residents. The recycling center accepts computers and related equipment as well as older television sets.

Additional information along with days and hours of operation may be found at <http://www.co.berks.pa.us/recycling> under the Electronic Waste link.

Question 5: The correct answer is C. Pennsylvania law requires that the assignment of titles be "sworn to before a notary public or other officer empowered to administer oaths or verified by a wholesale vehicle auction...or an issuing agent who is licensed as a vehicle dealer" [75 Pa.C.S. §1111(a)]. It is not required that the transfer be done at or through a dealership, although it may be.

A title that has simply been signed by the seller and was not notarized is known as a title assigned in blank. In general, it is illegal in Pennsylvania to possess a title assigned in blank [75 Pa.C.S. §1119(b)]. A title assigned in blank is subject to seizure by police and cannot be processed to change ownership of a motor vehicle.

Not intending to sound too glib, here's a very serious consideration for you when selling a car privately. Let's say that you, Mr. or Ms. Honest Citizen, sell your car in a private sale to Mr. A. Little Shady. You don't do it in front of a notary as you should. Mr. Shady walks out with the signed title, drives away with your vehicle, and later decides not to pay the sales tax on the purchase of the car. Mr. Shady never re-titles the car in his own name. A few years later, and conceivably several additional noncompliant sales later, when the car is used in the commission of a crime or is involved in an accident, who owns the car? According to state records, ownership will have never changed and the owner will be listed as Mr. or Ms. Honest Citizen – an embarrassing and potentially problematic situation for you depending on circumstances. In a private car sale, don't just sign a vehicle title over to anyone – go to a notary, dealership, or other transfer agent.

I hope that you enjoyed the brief quiz, and please remember that the personnel of the Bern Township Police Department are available to answer questions about new traffic and criminal laws and existing laws that affect us in our daily lives.

Hit & Run Car Accidents (Continued from Page 5)

the suspect all the way to Bernville to obtain the offender's registration plate number (without making contact, of course), and then called the police department, resulting in identification of the driver. ❖

Bern Township Municipal Authority

On June 28th, the Bern Township Municipal Authority Board approved a change to the Rules and Regulations by passing Resolution 1-2017. The Resolution changes when the monthly bill is due. In the past, if the payment was postmarked the 25th of any month, it was considered on time. The new rule states that payment must arrive in the office / bank by the 25th of the month or next business day if the office is closed. The BTMA office is closed on Fridays. If the 25th falls on a Friday the payment must be received in the office by Monday. When the 25th falls on a Monday Holiday and the BTMA office is closed, the payment will be due on Tuesday. All payments made at VIST Bank (the Route 183 Branch) are due on the 25th unless the 25th is a Sunday or legal bank Holiday, in which case, VIST will accept the on-time payment amount on the next business day. If you have any questions, please call the office at 610-916-9919.

The long awaited ACH payment method has arrived. If you are interested in having your monthly payment automatically deducted from your bank account each month please call the office or email BTMA at btma@comcast.net and we will send you a form to sign up for the service. All completed sign up forms must be mailed or delivered in person to the BTMA office.

If you have NOT provided us with your phone number and / or email address, please call or email BTMA your information. BTMA has signed an agreement with the Western Berks Water Authority to piggyback on an emergency call out service. Having your phone number or email address is particularly important to the BTMA water customers. The call out service is the only way you can receive notification if there is a water emergency. Thank you for your cooperation. ❖

Communication Information

The township sends email blasts to inform residents regarding current issues of the day. All emails are kept confidential. If you would like to sign up for this service, please call the Township Building to provide your email and street address. ❖

Please help to support your newsletter by purchasing ad space. Please call 610-926-2267 for information. We thank the businesses that have supported your newsletter

Important news inside that affects YOU!



“PRSR” STD”
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
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Permit No. 53

BERN TOWNSHIP
1069 OLD BERNVILLE ROAD
READING, PA 19605