

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **Public Information From:**

Franklin County Emergency Management and Homeland Security  
5300 Strawberry Farms Blvd.  
Columbus, Ohio 43230



### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **EMERGENCY MANAGERS WEIGH ODDS, IMPACT OF FUTURE DISASTERS**

#### ***From Tornadoes to Terrorism, County's First Comprehensive Risk Assessment Since 1996***

(COLUMBUS, OHIO) -- Franklin County Emergency Management and Homeland Security (FCEM&HS) officials gathered local subject-matter experts from across Franklin County to begin the sobering task of estimating which hazards -- from tornadoes to terrorism -- likely pose the greatest risk to residents and workers in the county.

They met August 18 at FCEM&HS offices in Columbus to provide input into the agency's update of the official Risk Assessment for Franklin County, the first comprehensive update of the assessment since 1996.

"An up-to-date risk assessment is critically important for the county -- it provides a solid foundation for smart emergency planning," said FCEM&HS Director Michael R. Pannell. "The finished document will serve as the basis for future emergency planning by all local governments in the county. Their input is invaluable."

The agency has been working on the project for several months. A draft of the assessment outlines natural and man-made emergencies and disasters -- such as snowstorms, floods and terrorist attacks -- that Franklin County may face. Some of the hazards listed are new since the 1996 assessment, including air/water pollution and contamination, extreme heat, emerging diseases and invasive species.

Officials and experts at Tuesday's meeting began the process of evaluating and ranking these hazards in order of their expected frequency, duration and impact on population, infrastructure and commerce. Ranking the hazards is expected to be completed by mid-September. A finished risk assessment document will be made available for public comment in the fall.

Besides FCEM&HS, the meeting included representatives from the Columbus Regional Airport Authority, Ohio Department of Public Safety, Columbus Public Health, Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Battelle Institute, City of Upper Arlington, Columbus Department of Public Safety, Franklin County Board of Health and City of Dublin.

(more)

Franklin County Emergency Management and Homeland Security is a local government agency which coordinates county-wide emergency/disaster planning, education, warning, response and recovery to minimize the adverse impact on area residents and property. To learn more, go to [www.franklincountyohio.gov/emahs/](http://www.franklincountyohio.gov/emahs/).

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Michael R. Pannell, Director FCEM&HS, speaks with reporters about the 2009 Franklin County Risk Assessment update.