

Ohio Emergency Management Agency

ALL-HAZARDS HERALD

Quarterly Newsletter

Autumn 2024



THIS EDITION:

The State of Ohio Emergency Operations Center celebrates its 30th Anniversary.

Ohio EMA Director receives Suiter Award.

Ohio EMA's #ReadySetSnowOhio winter safety series runs November 2024 through March 2025.

Upcoming Awareness Weeks are posted.

Ohio EMA Executive Director Sima Merick Receives Lacy E. Suiter Award



The National Emergency Management Association (NEMA) announced that Sima Merick, Executive Director of the Ohio Emergency Management Agency, is the recipient of the 2024 Lacy E. Suiter Distinguished Service in Emergency Management Award.

Merick was presented the award on Oct. 3, during NEMA's forum in Baltimore, Md.

The prestigious honor is presented annually to an individual who has made outstanding contributions throughout their career to any or all facets of emergency management. This includes the areas of preparedness, mitigation, response, or recovery at a local, state, regional, or national level. The career accomplishments should be of unusual merit.

A nearly 40-year veteran of the Ohio Department of Public Safety, Merick was appointed Executive Director for the Ohio Emergency Management Agency in 2015. She has led the state through numerous disasters – both natural and human-caused.

Merick presently serves on numerous boards as a chair or co-chair and is and continues to be an active member of NEMA

where she served two terms as President during the COVID outbreak response.

Merick has been called upon to testify in front of federal lawmakers on multiple occasions, to include: testifying in 2019, on behalf of NEMA to the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee – Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management on Disaster Preparedness: DRRA Implementation and FEMA Readiness.

Also, in September of 2021, as President of the National Emergency Management Association, she testified on behalf of NEMA to the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee on addressing the threats of worsening natural disasters.

An acknowledged national leader among her peers at local, state, and federal emergency management agencies, Merick is often sought out for her expertise and knowledge in program and grant administration.

Within the agency, she is sought after as a sounding board and mentor for junior staff.

Please join us in congratulating Merick on this significant recognition.

Public Affairs Office

#ReadySetSnowOhio Winter Safety Series

*Oh, the weather outside is frightful,
But the fire is so delightful,
And since we've no place to go,
Let it snow! Let it snow! Let it snow!*

The Ohio EMA's Winter Safety Series will kick off Winter Safety Awareness Week in mid-November. The campaign will be similar to the #BeatTheHeatOhio series as it shares safety and preparedness tips. Join us as we share messaging geared to keep Ohioans safe.

Upcoming Awareness Weeks:

- Nov. 17-23, 2024** - Winter Safety Awareness Week
- March 16-22, 2025** - Severe Weather Awareness Week
- March 19, 2025** - Statewide Tornado Drill, 9:50 a.m.

The State of Ohio Emergency Operations Center to Celebrate 30th Anniversary



The State of Ohio Emergency Operations Center will celebrate its 30th Anniversary on Oct. 27, 2024. Completed in 1994 this facility has been a point of coordination and a cornerstone in Ohio EMA's ability to keep Ohioans safe during times of disaster, emergencies, and major events.

The State Emergency Operations Center's purpose is to increase the state's capabilities to respond to disasters and emergencies, as well as to improve coordination among state agency partners; thus, allowing Ohio EMA to carry out its important mission to coordinate activities to mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters.

Ohio EMA is proud to celebrate the facility's 30 years of excellence, innovation, partnership, and growth.

Radiological Branch

Perry Nuclear Power Plant Drill

On Aug. 28 the state of Ohio and the Perry Nuclear Power Plant (PNPP) participated in a Dry Run exercise with the 10-mile Emergency Planning Zone (EPZ) risk counties of Lake, Ashtabula, and Geauga.



This was a partial participation exercise for the State and a full participation exercise for the risk counties. Participants take these training drills seriously and practice for the federally evaluated exercise which was held Sept. 24. These events give us all an opportunity to practice our communication protocols as well as our procedures.

The ultimate goal for all is to provide reasonable assurance that our program can protect the health and safety of the public in one of the unique catastrophic events.

Mansimran (Simran) Kaur, Planning Section

MEET THE TEAM



Simran joined the Ohio EMA Planning Section as an Emergency Preparedness Planner. Her first day in the new position was Aug. 26.

Please join us in congratulating Simran and wishing her all the best in her new role!

Mitigation Branch

FEMA announced that the Eagle Creek Dry Storage Basin and Hydraulic Improvements project was “identified for further review” through the Flood Mitigation Assistance grant program.

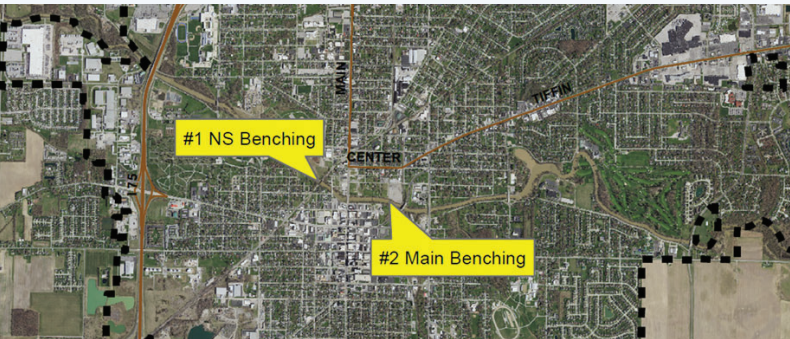
This work is part of a larger flood mitigation project developed by Hancock County and the Maumee Watershed Conservancy District referred to as the Hancock County Flood Risk Reduction (HCFRR) Program. The work to be partially funded with the Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) grant is the Eagle Creek Dry Storage Basin and benching on the Blanchard River.

The Eagle Creek Flood Basin project is a 3.75-mile-long, flood control dam designed to provide approximately 7,000 acres of storage for excess flows during flood events to reduce the peak flow rates in Eagle Creek and thereby the Blanchard River. The Blanchard River floodplain benching is proposed to tie in to a previous phase of benching in Findlay and continue upstream for about half a mile along the right descending bank of the Blanchard River, creating a semi-continuous conveyance feature.

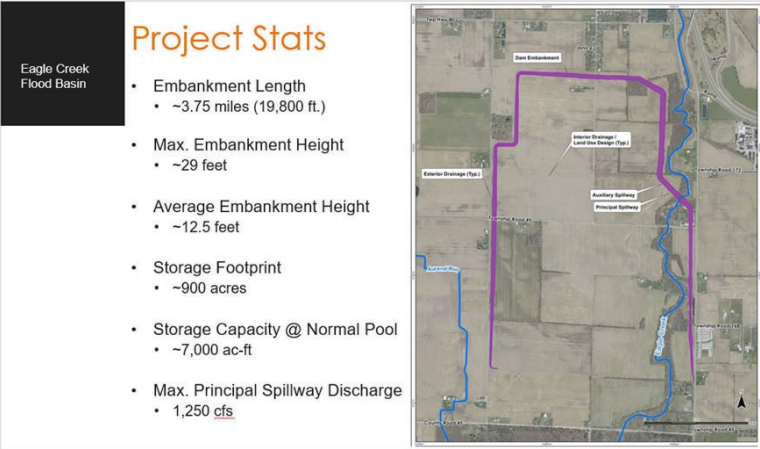
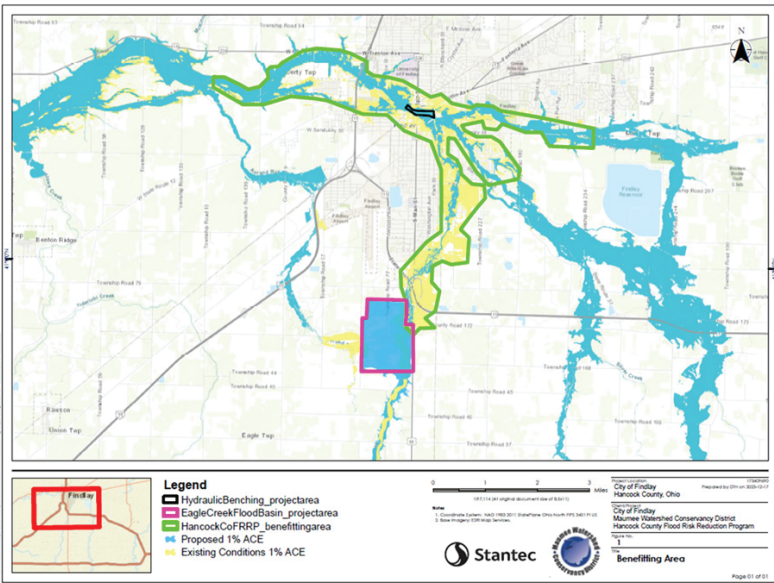
The additional benching (approximately 86,000 cubic yards of excavation) is expected to further reduce the risk of flooding for the community.

Total Cost	\$84 million
FEMA FMA Grant	\$24 million
State Funds	\$60 million

The map below shows the location of both benching projects on the Blanchard River in Findlay.



This map shows the reduction in flood levels when all HCFRR work is completed and the approximate location of the dry dam.



“Identified for Further Review” as defined by FEMA means the subapplication is selected and there is available funding under the applicable subtotals.

Identified for Further Review status does not automatically imply an award will be made.

Additional information may be requested from the applicant at this stage that may impact eligibility.

Work that Ohio EMA anticipates will need completion before the grant is awarded includes an Environmental Assessment, and answering any questions that FEMA has about the project design and/or application.

Logistics Branch

2024 Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) Deployments...

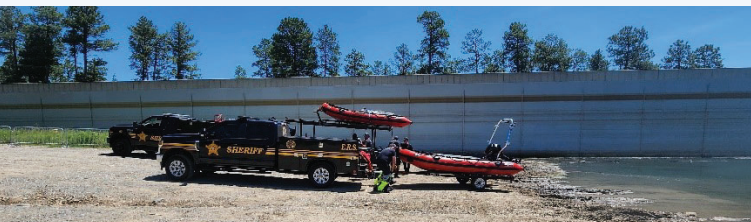
As this article is being prepared, forecasters are calling for increased chances of tropical storm/hurricane development threatening the U.S. Gulf coast over the coming weeks.

Despite this, the 2024 hurricane season to this point has been far less active than predicted earlier in the year. Hurricane deployments are among the most common for Ohio resources deploying via the emergency management assistance compact (EMAC) and a slow season results in a bit fewer EMAC deployments than expected as well.

Even with the slow hurricane season so far, Ohio has answered the EMAC call for support four times this year. With the ever changing requests, by print time of this article, there will likely be more deployments.

Republican National Convention (MN)

On July 13, close to 140 law enforcement officers representing the Akron Police Department, Cincinnati Police Department, Cleveland Metro Parks Police Department, Columbus Police Department, Cuyahoga County Sheriff's Office, the Ohio State Highway Patrol, and Trumbull County Sheriff's Office deployed to Milwaukee to assist with security at the Republican National Convention before returning to Ohio on July 19.



Wildfires and Flooding (NM) - August

On Aug. 1, a team of nine swiftwater technicians from the Butler County Sheriff's Office, with equipment loaded and boats in tow, departed from Ohio to the Ruidoso area in New Mexico for a two-week deployment assisting with rescues from flash floods over burn-scarred terrain from earlier wildfires. The team's mission was a success and they returned home on Sept. 17.



Hurricane Debby (FL, NC) - August: On Aug. 5 Ohio EMA deployed a Planning Section Chief to Tallahassee, Fla. to assist the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) with preparation and response to hurricane Debby. One day later, on Aug. 6, the Summit County Swift Water Rescue Team deployed to North Carolina for the same storm. Both deployments were abbreviated as the storm impacts were less than anticipated and both the Planning Section Chief and Summit County Swift Water Rescue Team returned home to Ohio after a couple of days.

We appreciate and are grateful for the dedication and efforts of the team members who deploy on these mission requests.

Joshua Steiner, Planning Section

MEET THE TEAM



Joshua joined the Ohio EMA Planning Section as an intern. His first day in the new position was Aug. 12.

Please join us in congratulating Joshua and wishing him a successful internship!

Planning Section

Everything You Wanted to Know About the Ohio EOP but Were Afraid to Ask

Most of us are familiar with emergency plans, some as routine as the fire and tornado drills that we have participated in since childhood. We understand the fundamental importance of knowing what to listen for, who to listen to, and how to keep each other safe. The Ohio Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) answers these same questions for state - level responses to and recoveries from hazards.

We all know the saying: hazards begin and end at the local level. Your local first responders will be the ones responding to the unattended, out - of - control campfire and in most cases, they will put the fire out themselves: no muss no fuss. In especially bad situations, local responders may recognize that the problem is simply too big. When help from neighboring counties isn't enough or when several counties are being impacted by the same event, that's when a state - level response may be necessary.

Who makes that call? What happens next? And who's paying for all this? Fundamental questions applicable to every state - level operation are covered in what we might think of as the first chapter of the Ohio EOP: the base plan, which also addresses issues like how frequently the plan authors should get the gang back together for revisions based on exercises, real-life events, or the four-year schedule mandated by Ohio law.

Beyond the base plan, Ohio coordinates state - level, interagency support through groups referred to as Emergency Support Functions (ESFs). Why functions, you ask? Because the public and private agencies that make up each ESF share a common purpose during emergencies and function in concert, according to ESF plans drawn up and revised by these players, themselves. These plans are kept in the ESF annex of the Ohio EOP.

Some hazards will have attending incidents with specific response and recovery plans particular to each: these plans form the incident specific annex. New challenges arise after transitioning from response to recovery operations and are addressed by public and private agencies grouped as Recovery Support Functions (RSFs) that, like their ESF counterparts, function according to plans organized in the RSF annex.

Support for issues like volunteer or donations management may arise in a variety of contexts, so support plans addressing these and other broadly - applicable concerns are organized in the support annex, the last annex you will be expected to remember for the quiz:

How many different named annexes are part of the Ohio EOP?

Bonus question: At least how often are Ohio EOP elements being updated?

The Ohio EOP is available online [HERE](#).



Disaster Recovery Branch

Join us for our bi-monthly, hour-long Lunch and Learn series! The series is hosted by the Ohio EMA Recovery Branch and co-hosted by the Ohio Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD). This series was initiated by FEMA Voluntary Agency Liaisons (VAL's), as a result of the March 14 severe weather event that impacted 11 counties and resulted in a presidential disaster declaration, DR-4777-OH.

All Ohio county EMA directors are encouraged to attend these sessions and to invite their community partners who aid the community in a collaborative effort in disaster preparation, responses, recovery, and/or mitigation. Attendance is casual in nature as your schedule allows.

Each event will discuss a subject that helps rebuild and initiate relationships on subject matter based on the FEMA Whole of Community concept. The host for the series is Bernice West, State of Ohio's Voluntary Agency Liaison (VAL) Point of Contact. West is joined by her co-hosts, Ohio VOAD partners, Erin Cordle and Brenda Hostetler.

The Lunch and Learns do not focus on the skillsets of county EMA directors. Rather, they emphasize relationship-building and sharing information on tools and techniques to create, expand, and renew relationships with community partners that will be beneficial in future disaster response and recovery events to include established Long-Term Recovery Committees.

When there is a disaster in our community or in a community for which there is an MOU, we have the responsibility to respond to the best of our individual abilities to help our communities to recover to the "new normal" after a disaster.

Emergency managers will engage with other governmental agencies, community leaders, community organizations, faith-based organizations, local and national businesses, disability organizations, and the general public.

Because of this variety of engagements, we seek out presenters who are subject matter experts in the fields that are most beneficial to our county emergency management agencies and

the community partners who aid the community before, during, and after a disaster.

We encourage county emergency management directors to submit suggestions for topics for the 2025 Lunch and Learn series of events. We are looking forward to hearing your suggestions that may spur conversation on relationship-building with our partners who respond to community disasters.



Below are themes from past events:

- June 12, 2024 - Long Term Recovery Committees for Disaster Recovery and Community Resilience
- June 26, 2024 - Hazard Mitigation; Recovering and Preparedness; Shelters/Community Resources
- July 10, 2024 – Libraries, Disaster Preparation, and Recovery
- July 24, 2024 - Financial Capability, Disaster Preparedness and Response
- Aug. 7, 2024 - Youth Development and Disaster Recovery Efforts
- Aug. 21, 2024 - Connecting with NVOAD Organizations and Resources
- Sept. 4, 2024 - Debris Management Cradle to Grave
- Sept. 18, 2024 - Why Does Mitigation Matter in All Stages of Long-Term Recovery (LTR)

Past and future sessions were/will be recorded and can be found here: [Ohio EMA Publications | Emergency Management Agency](#). Contact: Bernice West, Disaster Recovery Branch, at bwest2@dps.ohio.gov.

Grants

Best Practices for Grants Record Retention

Maintaining proper records for grants is critical to ensure compliance with funding requirements and regulatory guidelines. Proper record retention not only helps track the use of funds but also provides documentation for audits, reporting, and potential future grant applications.

The standard practice for record retention typically spans three to seven years after Ohio EMA's final financial report submission or the end of the grant period of performance, depending on the grant's requirements.

Key documents to retain include:

- Grant proposals and agreements
- Financial statements and expense reports
- Procurement documentation
- Correspondence with funders
- Audit reports and monitoring visit records

To streamline the process, it's important to establish a systematic filing system, either digitally or in physical form. Be sure to regularly review your retention policies and ensure that records are secure but accessible if needed for audits or compliance checks.

By following best practices for record retention, agencies can avoid penalties, safeguard their funding, and build a trusted reputation as a low-risk grant recipient.

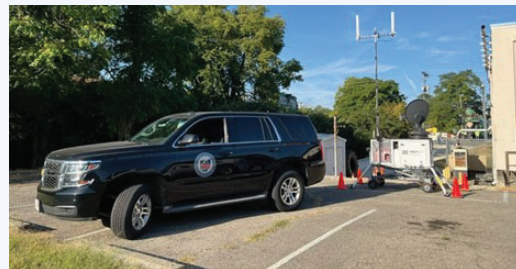
Ohio EMA's current Preparedness Grants Retention Schedule can be found [HERE](#).



Technical Communications

The Ohio EMA-owned AT&T FirstNet Compact Rapid Deployable (CRD) was requested for deployment to the Springfield Fire Department by the Clark County EMA on Sept. 18.

The CRD was deployed and set up to support First Responder data requirements in case the commercial cellular networks were unavailable or over taxed by general public users



One function of the CRD is to provide a discrete, password-protected Wi-Fi signal to a predetermined group of users. Additionally, the CRD functions as a stand-alone or network-connected cellular tower with satellite backhaul capability.

The Ohio EMA FirstNet CRD is available to support large-scale planned events and disaster recovery efforts. The CRD can be requested by contacting the Ohio EMA Watch Office at EMAWatch@dps.ohio.gov or 614-799-6500.

We will be looking to leverage these assets in other aspects of our maintenance plans to save time and money.

Dan Green, Preparedness Grants

MEET THE TEAM



We are pleased to announce that Dan Green has began his new position with Ohio EMA Preparedness Grants as a Grants Program Administrator. His first day in the new position was Aug. 12.

Please join us in congratulating Dan and wishing him all the best in his new role.

Policy and Accreditation

Program Feedback Request

Feedback loops are essential to any improvement effort, regardless if that effort is being put forward by an individual, a team or an organization. Ohio EMA is requesting your active participation in providing feedback to the state’s Emergency Management Program.

We’re seeking feedback from key stakeholders in three main categories: employees, county stakeholders and state/Non-Governmental Organization partners.

The feedback provided will assist us in the refinement of our next strategic plan as well as help guide the development of outcome driven efforts in the months and years to come.

Ohio EMA is excited to offer a survey-based feedback mechanism to allow for an anonymous and easy submission. Please consider taking just a few minutes to contribute to our program’s growth and continued success. If you have any questions, please direct them to Ohio EMA’s Policy and Accreditation Manager, Andrew Elder.

Click [HERE](#) to view the survey.

Sarah Potes, Preparedness Grants

MEET THE TEAM



Sarah joined the Ohio EMA Preparedness Grants Branch as a Disaster Services Consultant 2. Her first day in the new position was Aug. 12.

Please join us in congratulating Sarah and wishing her all the best in her new role!

Training & Exercise Section

Ohio EMA Upcoming Training

The Training and Exercise Section offers training throughout the entire state of Ohio. Trainings are listed for mid-July through mid-November. For more details and a complete list of courses, visit the [Ohio EMA website](#).

TRAINING LINKS:

- [Ohio EMA Training Calendar](#)
- [Login or Create a New Account on the DPS Training Campus](#)



TRAINING POINTS OF CONTACT:

- **Lisa Jones:**
(614) 799-3824
ljones@dps.ohio.gov
 - o EMI Training Applications & Courses
 - o G300 Intermediate ICS & G400 Advanced ICS Courses
- **Emily Suezo:**
(614) 799-3666
elsuezo@dps.ohio.gov
 - o National Domestic Preparedness Consortium (NDPC)
 - o Rural Domestic Preparedness Consortium (RDPC)
 - o FEMA G Courses & Ohio OH Courses

- NOTE:**
- Seats available listed are as of the release of this update & will change quickly.
 - All classes will be posted on the DPS training campus at least 60 days prior to the start of the class.
 - Please read the Training Policy & Catalog for more information on Ohio EMA trainings.

Ohio EMA Upcoming Training

G-400 Advanced ICS (Montgomery)	Oct. 21-22, 2024
OH-386 Mass Fatalities Incident (Delaware)	Oct. 22-23, 2024
G-361 Flood Fight Operations (Ohio EMA)	Oct. 22-23, 2024
G-365 Partnerships for Spotter Groups (Virtual)	Oct. 23, 2024
G-358 Evacuation & Re-Entry Planning (Franklin)	Oct. 24-25, 2024
G-400 Advanced ICS (Cuyahoga)	Oct. 24-25, 2024
G-400 Advanced ICS (Muskingum)	Oct. 24-25, 2024
G-400 Advanced ICS (Lorain)	Oct. 28-29, 2024
G-300 Intermediate ICS (Defiance)	Oct. 28-30, 2024
G-2300 Intermediate EOC Functions (Hocking)	Oct. 28-30, 2024
G-191 ICS/EOC Interface (Warren)	Oct. 29, 2024
G-191 ICS/EOC Interface (Butler)	Oct. 29, 2024
G-367 Emergency Planning for Campus Executives (Mahoning)	Nov. 5, 2024
L-105 Public Information Basics (Lake)	Nov. 5-7, 2024
G-400 Advanced ICS (Stark)	Nov. 6-7, 2024
G-300 Intermediate ICS (Summit)	Nov. 6-8, 2024
G-400 Advanced ICS (Defiance)	Nov. 6-7, 2024
G-191 ICS/EOC Interface (Trumbull)	Nov. 7, 2024
G-400 Advanced ICS (Hamilton)	Nov. 7-8, 2024
OH-289 Public Information Officer Awareness (Stark)	Nov. 9, 2024
G-300 Intermediate ICS (Butler)	Nov. 12-14, 2024
G-191 ICS/EOC Interface (Montgomery)	Nov. 13, 2024
G-400 Advanced ICS (Trumbull)	Nov. 13-14, 2024
G-191 ICS/EOC Interface (Mahoning)	Nov. 14, 2024
G-400 Intermediate ICS (Licking)	Nov. 14-15, 2024
G-400 Advanced ICS (Greene)	Nov. 18-19, 2024
L-388 Advanced Public Information Officer (APIO) Ohio EMA	Nov. 18-22, 2024
G-300 Intermediate ICS (Columbiana)	Nov. 18-20, 2024
L-105 Public Information Basics (Tuscarawas)	Nov. 19-21, 2024
OH-197 Planning for Needs in Emergencies (Hamilton)	Nov. 21-22, 2024
G-400 Advanced ICS (Summit)	Dec. 9-10, 2024
G-2300 Intermediate EOC Functions (Allen)	Dec. 9-10, 2024
G-393 Mitigation for Emergency Managers (Lake)	Dec. 9-11, 2024
G-300 Intermediate ICS (Mahoning)	Dec. 9-11, 2024
L-967 Logistics Section Chief (Franklin)	Dec. 9-13, 2024
OH-289 Public Information Officer Awareness (Lucas)	Dec. 10, 2024
L-105 Public Information Basics (Trumbull)	Dec. 10-12, 2024
G-288/G489 Local Volunteer & Donations Management & Management of Spontaneous Volunteers in Disasters (Perry)	Dec. 12-13, 2024
G-300 Intermediate ICS (Ashtabula)	Dec. 13-15, 2025

G-300 Intermediate ICS (Jackson)	Dec. 18-20, 2025
G-2300 Intermediate EOC Functions (Tuscarawas)	Jan. 6-7, 2025
L950 Incident Commander (Union)	Jan. 6-10, 2025
G-300 Intermediate ICS (Lucas)	Jan. 7-9, 2025
G-400 Advanced ICS (Ashtabula)	Jan. 11-12, 2025
G-400 Advanced ICS (Mahoning)	Jan. 13-14, 2025
OH-202 Debris Management (Lawrence)	Jan. 15, 2025
G-300 Intermediate ICS (Shelby)	Jan. 21-23, 2025
L-146 Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) (Jackson)	Jan. 22-23, 2025
G-300 Intermediate ICS (Delaware)	Jan. 22-24, 2025
G-300 Intermediate ICS (Preble)	Jan. 24-26, 2025
L-146 Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) (Lorain)	Jan 27-28, 2025
G-300 Intermediate ICS (Lake)	Jan. 27-29, 2025
G-400 Advanced ICS (Lucas)	Jan. 28-29, 2025
G-400 Advanced ICS (Knox)	Jan. 29-30, 2025
CERT Basic (Perry)	Jan. 29-31, 2025

Nicholas Nash, Radiological Branch



MEET THE TEAM

Nicholas joined the Ohio EMA Radiological Branch as a Radiological Instrument Technician 2. His first day in the new position was Sept. 9.

Please join us in congratulating Nick and wishing him all the best in his new role!

Ohio Emergency Management Agency



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Follow us on the web at:

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