

NASA Now Has Office to Protect Earth From Asteroid Apocalypse

NASA has established a new office to coordinate its efforts to protect Earth from deadly asteroids.

The space agency announced its new Planetary Defense Coordination Office, which will list and classify any space rocks that could hit the earth and issue alerts of any potential impacts.

“The formal establishment of the Planetary Defense Coordination Office makes it evident that the agency is committed to perform a leadership role in national and international efforts for detection of these natural impact hazards, and to be engaged in planning if there is a need for planetary defense,” said Planetary Defense Officer Lindley Johnson, a longtime NEO program executive and now lead program executive.

It will also work with other government agencies, such as the Defense Department and FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency), to plan responses when it looks like an asteroid or comet is going to strike.

“Asteroid detection, tracking and defense of our planet is something that NASA, its interagency partners and the global community take very seriously,” said John Grunsfeld, associate administrator for NASA’s Science Mission Directorate in Washington.

“While there are no known impact threats at this time, the 2013 Chelyabinsk super-fireball and the recent ‘Halloween Asteroid’ close approach remind us of why we need to remain vigilant and keep our eyes to the sky,” Grunsfeld said.