



5.3 HAZARD RANKING

After the hazards of concern were identified for Washington County, the hazards were ranked to describe their probability of occurrence and their impact on population, property (general building stock including critical facilities) and the economy. Each participating town or village may have differing degrees of risk exposure and vulnerability compared to the County as a whole; therefore, each jurisdiction ranked the degree of risk to each hazard as it pertains to their community using the same methodology as applied to the County-wide ranking. This assured consistency in the overall ranking of risk process. The hazard ranking for the County and each participating municipality can be found in their jurisdictional annex in Volume II of this plan.

5.3.1 Hazard Ranking Methodology

The methodology used to rank the hazards of concern for Washington County is described below. Estimates of risk for the County were developed using methodologies promoted by FEMA’s hazard mitigation planning guidance and generated by FEMA’s HAZUS-MH risk assessment tool.

Probability of Occurrence

The probability of occurrence is an estimate of how often a hazard event occurs. A review of historic events assists with this determination. Each hazard of concern is rated in accordance with the numerical ratings and definitions in Table 5.3-1.

Table 5.3-1. Probability of Occurrence Ranking Factors

Rating	Probability Category	Definition
1	Rare	Hazard event is not likely to occur within 100 years (>1% chance of occurrence in any given year)
2	Occasional	Hazard event is likely to occur within 100 years (1% chance of occurrence in any given year)
3	Frequent	Hazard event is likely to occur within 25 years (4% chance of occurrence in any given year)

Impact

The impact of each hazard is considered in three categories: impact on population, impact on property (general building stock including critical facilities), and impact on the economy. Based on documented historic losses and a subjective assessment by the Planning Committee, an impact rating of high, medium, or low is assigned with a corresponding numeric value for each hazard of concern. In addition, a weighting factor is assigned to each impact category: three (3) for population, two (2) for property, and one (1) for economy. This gives the impact on population the greatest weight in evaluating the impact of a hazard.

Table 5.3-2 presents the numerical rating, weighted factor and description for each impact category

Table 5.3-2. Numerical Values and Definitions for Impacts on Population, Property and Economy

Category	Weighting Factor	Low Impact* (1)	Medium Impact (2)	High Impact (3)
Population	3	14% or less of your population is exposed to a hazard with potential for	15% to 29% of your population is exposed to a hazard with potential for	30% or more of your population is exposed to a hazard with potential





Category	Weighting Factor	Low Impact* (1)	Medium Impact (2)	High Impact (3)
		measurable life safety impact, due to its extent and location	measurable life safety impact, due to its extent and location	for measurable life safety impact, due to its extent and location
Property	2	Property exposure is 14% or less of the total replacement cost for your community	Property exposure is 15% to 29% of the total replacement cost for your community	Property exposure is 30% or more of the total replacement cost for your community
Economy	1	Loss estimate is 9% or less of the total replacement cost for your community	Loss estimate is 10% to 19% of the total replacement cost for your community	Loss estimate is 20% or more of the total replacement cost for your community

Note: A numerical value of zero is assigned if there is no impact.

*For the purposes of this exercise, "impacted" means exposed for population and property and loss for economy.

Risk Ranking Value

The risk ranking for each hazard is then calculated by multiplying the numerical value for probability of occurrence by the sum of the numerical values for impact. The equation is as follows: Weighting Factor (1, 2, or 3) X Impact Value (6 to 18) = Hazard Ranking Value. Based on the total for each hazard, a priority ranking is assigned to each hazard of concern (high, medium, or low).

5.3.2 Hazard Ranking Results

Using the process described above, the risk ranking for the identified hazards of concern was determined for Washington County. Based on the combined risk values for probability of occurrence and impact to Washington County, a priority ranking of "high", "medium" or "low" risk was assigned. The hazard ranking for the Washington planning area is detailed in the subsequent tables that present the step-wise process for the ranking. The county-wide risk ranking includes the entire planning area and may not reflect the highest risk indicated for any of the participating jurisdictions. The resulting ranks of each municipality indicate the differing degrees of risk exposure, and vulnerability. The results support the appropriate selection and prioritization of initiatives to reduce the highest levels of risk for each municipality. Both the County and the participating jurisdictions have applied the same methodology to develop the county-wide risk and local rankings to ensure consistency in the overall ranking of risk.

This risk ranking exercise serves two purposes: 1) to describe the probability of occurrence for each hazard, and 2) to describe the impact each would have on the people, property and economy of Washington County. Estimates of risk for Washington County were developed using methodologies promoted by FEMA's hazard mitigation planning guidance and generated by FEMA's HAZUS-MH risk assessment tool.

Table 5.3-3 shows the probability ranking assigned for likelihood of occurrence for each hazard.

Table 5.3-3. Probability of Occurrence Ranking for Hazards of Concern for Washington County

Hazard of Concern	Probability	Numeric Value
Earthquake	Occasional	2
Flood	Frequent	3
Severe Storm	Frequent	3
Severe Winter Storm	Frequent	3
Wildfire	Frequent	3

Table 5.3-4 shows the impact evaluation results for each hazard of concern, including impact on property, structures, and the economy on the County level. It is noted that several hazards that have a high impact on the



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local jurisdictional level, may have a lower impact when analyzed county-wide. Jurisdictional ranking results are presented in each local annex in Section 9 - Annexes of this plan. The weighting factor results and a total impact for each hazard also are summarized.



Table 5.3-4. Impact Ranking for Hazards of Concern for Washington County

Hazard of Concern	Impact	Population		Impact	Property		Impact	Economy		Total Impact Rating (Population + Property + Economy)
		Numeric Value	Multiplied by Weighing Factor (3)		Numeric Value	Multiplied by Weighing Factor (2)		Numeric Value	Multiplied by Weighing Factor (1)	
Earthquake	H	3	3 x 3 = 9	M	2	2 x 2 = 4	L	1	1 x 1 = 1	14
Flood	L	1	3 x 1 = 3	M	2	2 x 2 = 4	H	3	1 x 3 = 3	10
Severe Storm	H	3	3 x 3 = 9	H	3	2 x 3 = 6	L	1	1 x 1 = 1	16
Severe Winter Storm	H	3	3 x 3 = 9	H	3	2 x 3 = 6	M	2	1 x 2 = 2	17
Wildfire	H	3	3 x 3 = 9	M	2	2 x 2 = 4	H	3	1 x 3 = 3	16



Table 5.3-5 presents the total ranking value for each hazard.

Table 5.3-5. Total Risk Ranking Value for Hazards of Concern for Washington County

Hazard of Concern	Probability	Impact	Total = (Probability x Impact)
Earthquake	2	14	28
Flood	3	10	30
Severe Storm	3	16	48
Severe Winter Storm	3	17	51
Wildfire	3	16	48

Table 5.3-6 presents the hazard ranking category by jurisdiction assigned for each hazard of concern. The ranking categories are determined by an evaluation of the total risk ranking score into three categories, low, medium, and high whereby a total score of 14 and below is categorized as low, 15 to 30 is medium, and 31 and over is considered a high risk category.

These rankings have been used as one of the bases for identifying the jurisdictional hazard mitigation strategies included in Section 9 - Annexes of this plan. The summary rankings for the County reflect the results of the vulnerability analysis for each hazard of concern and vary from the specific results of each jurisdiction. For example, the severe storm hazard may be ranked high in one jurisdiction, but due to the exposure and impact county-wide, it is ranked as a medium hazard and is addressed in the county mitigation strategy accordingly. This is depicted below. Please note that this table does not include the adjustments made by each municipality during the update of their individual annexes. Refer to Section 9 – Annexes for those adjustments.

Table 5.3-6. Summary of Overall Ranking of Natural Hazards by Jurisdiction

Washington County Municipalities	Hazards of Concern				
	Earthquake	Flood	Severe Storm	Severe Winter Storm	Wildfire
Argyle (T)	High	Medium	High	High	High
Argyle (V)	High	Medium	High	High	Low
Cambridge (T)	Medium	Medium	High	High	High
Cambridge (V)	Medium	High	High	High	High
Dresden (T)	Medium	High	High	High	High
Easton (T)	Medium	Medium	High	High	High
Fort Ann (T)	Medium	High	High	High	High
Fort Ann (V)	Medium	High	High	High	High
Fort Edward (T)	Low*	Medium*	Medium*	Medium*	Medium*
Fort Edward (V)	High	Medium	High	High	High
Granville (T)	Medium	Medium	High	High	High
Granville (V)	Medium	Medium	High	High	High
Greenwich (T)	Medium	Medium	High	High	High



Washington County Municipalities	Hazards of Concern				
	Earthquake	Flood	Severe Storm	Severe Winter Storm	Wildfire
Greenwich (V)	Low*	Low*	Medium*	Medium*	Low*
Hampton (T)	Medium	Medium	High	High	High
Hartford (T)	High	Medium	High	High	High
Hebron (T)	Medium	Medium	High	High	High
Hudson Falls (V)	Medium	Medium	High	High	High
Jackson (T)	Medium	High	High	High	High
Kingsbury (T)	High	Medium	High	High	High
Putnam (T)	Medium	High	High	High	High
Salem (T)	Medium	Medium	High	High	Medium
White Creek (T)	Medium	High	High	High	High
Whitehall (T)	Medium	Medium	High	High	High
Whitehall (V)	Medium	High	High	High	High

Note: The rankings listed in the table above reflect municipal input.

* ranking adjusted by the municipality