

Czech scientists see growing risk of asteroid hitting Earth

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The astronomers, from the Czech Academy of Sciences, drew their conclusion after analysing 144 bolides—large meteors that explode in the atmosphere—from the Taurids and detecting a new branch with at least two asteroids measuring 200-300 metres (220-330 yards) in diameter.

"Most probably, the branch also includes many undetected asteroids which are dozens of metres in diameter or larger," the Czech academy said in a [press release](#).

"Hence, the danger of a crash with an [asteroid](#) grows markedly once every few years that the Earth encounters this stream of inter-planetary material."

The new branch comprises objects moving together around the Sun, and the Earth encounters it once every few years for a period of about three weeks.

"During this period, the probability of a collision with a larger object (of about dozens of metres in [diameter](#)) is markedly higher," the Academy said.

The asteroids are very fragile, but when they are this large they may penetrate deep into the atmosphere and pose a real threat of collision with Earth, it added.

The study urges further research to obtain "a better description of this real source of potentially hazardous objects large enough to cause a local or even continental disaster."

The paper is [available on the](#) *Astronomy & Astrophysics* website pending publication in its renowned journal.

More information: *Astronomy & Astrophysics* (2017).
[www.aanda.org/component/article ... /0004-6361/201730787](http://www.aanda.org/component/article?id=0004-6361/201730787)

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