



CITY OF EASTHAMPTON

BOARD OF HEALTH

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Public Health
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June 1, 2021

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Mosquito Spraying

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy Affairs (EEA) recently announced an application process for municipalities to opt out of mosquito spraying.

Massachusetts is currently experiencing an Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) outbreak. Outbreaks typically occur every 10-20 years and last for about 2-3 years. The most recent EEE outbreak in Massachusetts began in 2019 and included 12 total cases with 6 fatalities. EEE is a serious but rare disease caused by a virus transmitted to humans and animals through mosquitoes. There is currently no treatment for EEE and in Massachusetts, about half of the people identified with EEE died from the infection. Those who survive are often permanently disabled and do not recover completely.

When there is a high risk of human disease over a large geographic area, and the risk is not effectively being reduced by the use of personal protection and truck-based spraying, aerial pesticide spraying may be recommended by both the Department of Public Health and the MA Department of Agricultural Resources. Aerial spraying is conducted by airplane or helicopter between dusk and dawn (approximately 7pm-4am depending on the time of year) in areas of concern.

The pesticide used is Anvil 10+10, a product extensively tested and used to control mosquitoes in both ground-level and aerial spraying in the U.S. Anvil 10+10 contains two ingredients: Sumithrin and piperonyl butoxide. Sumithrin is an ingredient similar to the natural components of the chrysanthemum flower and is also found in other pesticide products used indoors, in pet shampoos, and tick control treatments. It is rapidly inactivated and decomposes with exposure to light and air, with a half-life of less than one day in the air and on plants. In soil, it breaks down rapidly and has proven to be extremely effective in killing mosquitoes worldwide for over 20 years. Piperonyl butoxide (PBO) serves to increase the ability of Sumithrin to kill mosquitoes. The product is registered by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and in Massachusetts for this use. It has been used in aerial applications for mosquito control in 2006,

2010, 2012, and 2019, and is also used by some of the Mosquito Control Districts for ground applications. Easthampton is currently not a member of a regional Mosquito Control District.

The (EPA) has evaluated these pesticides for their safety and has determined that they do not pose an unreasonable risk to birds or mammals, if used according to the product label directions. The product being applied has a very short half-life (one day) and breaks down rapidly in sunlight. The Department of Agricultural Resources has conducted monitoring of honeybee hives during past aerial spraying events and has seen no negative effects on honeybees.

If aerial spraying were to occur in Easthampton, notification would be provided directly to cities and towns and their legislators, and notice goes out through the media. Additionally, anyone can use this form in order to be personally notified: <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/how-to-request-to-be-notified-of-an-aerial-spray-or-wide-area-emergency-operation-conducted-by-the-state-reclamation-and-mosquito-control-board>

However, it is important to highlight that historically, aerial spraying has not been identified as a need for the western part of Massachusetts and has typically only occurred in the eastern part of the state and occasionally in the central area. The City Council has the authority to opt-out of mosquito spraying. To request an exclusion, an application must be submitted, and an alternative mosquito control management plan must be completed and approved. The deadline to opt-out of mosquito spraying for 2021 was May 28, 2021.

The Easthampton Board of Health will provide input for the City Council in future years if opting out of spraying is considered. Board of Health chair, Maggie Hebert, states: “EEE is a significant risk to human lives and the Board of Health takes this risk very seriously. I trust that the MA Department of Public Health and Agricultural Resources would not recommend aerial spraying unless a significant risk to human lives were at stake.”

Although aerial spraying may sometimes be necessary to reduce human risk, it will not eliminate risk. It is critical that residents protect themselves from mosquito bites by applying insect repellent when outdoors, draining standing water where mosquitoes breed, repairing screens, and – when risk is greatest-- avoiding outdoor activity during peak mosquito hours.

For more information on EEE and aerial spraying, please visit: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/mosquito-control-and-spraying>

For more information on the exclusion process, please visit: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/application-for-municipality-opt-out-of-srmcb-spraying>.