

Lehigh County Vector Borne Disease Control Program (VBDC)

The VBDC program is a cooperative effort between Counties and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Lehigh County's Program is administered through the Lehigh County Conservation District. The goal of the program is to protect public health. The main focus is to collect and test mosquitoes for West Nile Virus. There is no cost to the municipality for our services.

Mosquito surveillance, testing and control, limits the transmission of West Nile virus and reduces the distress caused by nuisance mosquitoes. We also perform tick collections to determine infection rates and abundance of local tick populations. This is critical for the medical community in the clinical diagnosis of Lyme disease and several other tick-borne pathogens that are spreading into Pennsylvania.

Routine mosquito surveillance is performed using site specific traps and techniques. (See included document) Mosquitoes are processed and sent to the DEP lab in Harrisburg for testing. Results inform our subsequent treatments and actions.

Mosquitoes are best controlled in the immature stages – egg, larvae and pupae. Elimination of standing water and source reduction are the first levels of control. We are focused on public property. Catch basins, culverts and storm drains are notorious mosquito breeding sites that are routinely checked. Also, retention ponds, park areas, compost facilities, waste treatment plants and recycling centers and community gardens are places that provide breeding habitats. A pesticide applicator chooses and applies the appropriate registered pesticide products in areas where larval or pupal mosquitoes are found. They are licensed by the PA Department of Agriculture as Commercial Pesticide Applicators.

While some municipalities have a Standing Water Ordinance, many do not. Adequate means of enforcement is the most often given reason for not having any rules for citizens to be compelled to follow. But lack of support at the local level makes it difficult for us to address problems on private property. Our goal is to reduce risk for everyone. Mosquitoes do not adhere to property lines. One resident's junk breeds another resident's mosquitoes, and disease. We can provide a template Standing Water Ordinance if requested.

For complaint calls from citizens regarding mosquitoes, we will visit the property and set a trap, only if given access. The District treats private property based on our Policy for Pesticide Application.

Regarding West Nile virus suppression, truck mounted Ultra-low Volume (ULV) sprays are conducted when acceptable virus activity levels are exceeded as indicated by trapping and testing results. These mosquito control events happen at dusk. You will be notified 48 hours before a scheduled event. People listed on the Pesticide Hypersensitivity Registry and local apiaries will be contacted by the coordinator and informed about the event. We will maintain a 500-foot buffer from their properties as dictated by PA law.

The program operates under a DEP approved management plan according to CDC recommendations. Thresholds for treatment, our control products, protocols and other support information can be found in our Pesticide Discharge Management Plan (PDMP), which is available to you upon request. We do not perform tick control.

It is beneficial to have municipal personnel learn about mosquito habitat and control. More eyes on the ground help us to be more efficient. For ticks, best management practices for landscaping in public parks and tick-

borne disease prevention for the employees themselves are vital considerations. We can assist you with training and educational programming.

Community outreach is an important part of a public health program. Elimination of breeding sites around homes is the most effective way to limit local mosquito populations. Personal prevention is the best way to avoid tick bites. As the season approaches you can post information on your municipal website to educate residents. Other outlets for education are your community social media pages and newsletters.

You may have employees who are licensed pesticide applicators. If you wish to have personnel trained and certified to treat for mosquitoes, we can assist with that process. The test is offered monthly for a fee of \$10. It is Category 16 Public Health Invertebrate Pests.

Be aware that any update training related to proper use, transport and storage of pesticides counts toward MS4 education requirements. Present an agenda of the meeting to your MS4 Coordinator to have credits recorded.

Thanks for your cooperation and please consider the adoption of a Standing Water Ordinance if you do not already have one in your municipal regulations.

Unless notified otherwise, we will assume that you are aware of and are in support of the program and our activities occurring on your municipal properties.

Vector-Borne Disease Control Contact:

Main Contact:

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