

Efforts to combat mosquito threats continue in New Bedford

Aerial spraying for mosquitoes that began on Wednesday, August 22, is expected overnight in New Bedford tonight, Friday, August 23 into the early morning of Saturday, August 24.

Presence of EEE in Buttonwood Park Area

Deceased wildlife are indicators of possible EEE or West Nile Virus in an area. On Friday, August 23, a deceased bird found in the Buttonwood Park area of New Bedford was tested and found positive for EEE. New Bedford and surrounding municipalities have had multiple positive tests of bird-biting and mammal-biting mosquitoes with EEE, leading to the classification of the risk in Greater New Bedford as 'critical' for EEE.

State Guidance for Residents in Critical Risk Areas

According to the state's Department of Public Health (DPH), it remains critically important for people in communities at critical, high and moderate risk for Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) to continue to take personal precautions against mosquito bites. These steps include using EPA-approved bug spray, wearing long sleeves and pants outdoors to reduce exposed skin, and cancelling outdoor activities in the hours from dusk to dawn when mosquitoes are most active.

Dusk Closures Continue

The City of New Bedford recently began closing parks and other open public spaces at dusk in response to the risk of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE). Closures will continue until Friday, September 13; park lights will be turned off at dusk.

(approximately 7:30 p.m.). The park closures will be reevaluated and the City will announce its plans from September 13 onward. Athletic leagues and other organizations utilizing the park should not continue their activities beyond dusk, due to the increased risk of EEE.

Ground Sprayings Continue

Ground spraying for mosquitoes will continue through the summer in the early mornings of Fridays and Tuesdays. The state is also conducting aerial sprayings. Friday rounds of spraying will target areas including Buttonwood Park, Brooklawn Park, Fort Taber, Hazelwood Park, Riverside Park, Clasky Common Park, Ashley Park, the Poor Farm area, Custom House Square and the downtown area. Tuesday rounds of spraying will target the far North End of the city, including the areas surrounding the New Bedford Business Park, New Bedford Regional Airport, Sassaquin Pond, and Acushnet Avenue north of Phillips Avenue. Ground spraying occurs place between 2:00 am and sunrise on Friday and Tuesday morning, weather permitting. Residents in the vicinity of the targeted areas may wish to close their windows this evening prior to the spraying.

Precautionary Measures

The same precautionary measures are advised for EEE, West Nile Virus, and the Zika virus. These include the following:

Avoid Mosquito Bites

Ø Be Aware of Peak Mosquito Hours – While mosquitoes are out at all hours of the day, their peak biting times are from dusk to dawn. Consider rescheduling outdoor activities that occur during evening or early morning. Otherwise, take extra care to use repellent and protective clothing, especially if you work or spend a lot of time outdoors.

Ø Clothing Can Help Reduce Mosquito Bites. Although it may be difficult to do when it's hot, wearing long-sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors will help keep mosquitoes away

from your skin.

Ø Apply Insect Repellent when you go outdoors. Use a repellent with DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), permethrin, picaridin (KBR 3023), IR3535 or oil of lemon eucalyptus [p-methane 3, 8-diol (PMD)] according to the instructions on the product label. DEET products should not be used on infants under two months of age and should be used in concentrations of 30% or less on older children. Oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under three years of age. Permethrin products are intended for use on items such as clothing, shoes, bed nets and camping gear and should not be applied to skin.

Mosquito-Proof Your Home

Ø Drain Standing Water – Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. Limit the number of places around your home for mosquitoes to breed by either draining or getting rid of items that hold water. Check rain gutters and drains. Empty any unused flowerpots and wading pools, and change water in birdbaths frequently.

Ø Install or Repair Screens – Some mosquitoes like to come indoors. Keep them outside by having tightly-fitting screens on all of your windows and doors.