

News Release



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STATE OFFICIALS ANNOUNCE PLANS TO CONDUCT AERIAL SPRAYING FOR MOSQUITOES IN SECTIONS OF WORCESTER AND MIDDLESEX COUNTIES

BOSTON (August 21, 2019) – The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) today announced that aerial spraying for mosquitoes will take place in parts of Worcester and Middlesex Counties which is anticipated to begin this Sunday. So far this year, 37 communities in Massachusetts have been found by DPH to be at high or critical risk for the Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) virus.

The 17 communities in the spray zone are Ashland, Berlin, Framingham, Hopkinton, Marlborough, Milford, Millbury, Northbridge, Northborough, Shrewsbury, Sudbury, Sutton, Worcester, Upton, Grafton, Southborough, and Westborough.

MDAR will conduct and monitor aerial spraying in these specific areas of Worcester and Middlesex Counties anticipated to begin on Sunday, August 25, and continue over several evenings. However, the ability to spray is weather-dependent and the schedule may change. Officials will continue to monitor the area over the next two weeks to evaluate whether a second round of spraying may be required to achieve maximal effectiveness.

Yesterday, DPH [announced](#) a second round of aerial spraying for parts of southeastern Massachusetts anticipated to begin tonight, August 21, and continue over several evenings.

Residents are encouraged to visit the DPH website at www.mass.gov/guides/aerial-mosquito-control-summer-2019 for the latest updates on spraying in their communities.

EEE is a rare but serious and potentially fatal disease that can affect people of all ages. The first two human cases of EEE in Massachusetts since 2013 were announced on [August 10](#) and [August 16](#), and are an indication of the current significant risk of EEE in the Commonwealth.

“Based on the mosquito surveillance data findings this year, combined with our experience with EEE, it is important to use aerial spraying to help reduce public health risk,” said **Public Health Commissioner Monica Bharel, MD, MPH**. “Spraying does not eliminate risk, however, and we continue to emphasize that residents use EPA-approved bug spray, wear long sleeves and pants to cover exposed skin, and cancel outdoor activities during the evening hours when mosquitoes are most active.”

“Due to the high risk levels in these communities, the Commonwealth is taking action to protect public health by conducting an aerial spray to reduce the area’s population of mosquitoes that transmit the EEE virus,” said **MDAR Assistant Commissioner Ashley Randle**. “As aerial sprays cannot completely eliminate the risk of EEE transmission, we ask the public to follow the personal protection practices suggested by DPH.”

The pesticide used is called Anvil 10+10, a product extensively tested and used in both ground-level and aerial spraying in the U.S. to control mosquitoes. Anvil 10+10 contains two ingredients: Sumithrin and Piperonyl butoxid. Sumithrin is an ingredient similar to the natural components of the chrysanthemum flower which is also found in other pesticide products used indoors, in pet shampoos, and tick control treatments. Sumithrin 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 degrades rapidly. Sumithrin has proven to be extremely effective in killing mosquitoes worldwide for over 20 years. Piperonyl butoxide serves to increase the ability of Sumithrin to kill mosquitoes.

There are no health risks expected during or after spraying and there is no evidence that aerial spraying will exacerbate certain health conditions such as asthma or chemical sensitivity. No special precautions are recommended; however, residents can reduce exposure by staying indoors during spraying. Aerial spraying is not expected to have any impacts on surface water or drinking water.

Aerial spraying will be conducted in the nighttime hours when fish are less likely to be at the surface feeding and honeybees are most likely to be in their hives. However, owners should cover small ornamental fishponds during the night(s) of spraying. While it is not necessary to bring animals indoors during spraying, keeping pets inside will minimize the risk of exposure.

Although the aerial spray is considered necessary to reduce human risk, it will not eliminate it. Residents must continue to protect themselves from mosquito bites by staying indoors during peak mosquito hours, applying insect repellent when outdoors, draining standing water where mosquitoes breed, and repairing screens in doors and windows. Residents should also take steps to protect their domestic animals from mosquito bites.

For questions about aerial spraying, contact the MDAR Crop and Pest Services at (617) 626-1700.

For the most updated information on EEE risk and aerial spraying, contact the DPH Division of Epidemiology at (617) 983-6800 or visit the DPH website at www.mass.gov/guides/aerial-mosquito-control-summer-2019. For updated risk levels, mosquito results, maps and incidence of positive mosquito samples, visit www.mass.gov/dph/mosquito.

For questions about mosquito control in your city or town: Contact your local board of health (listed online or in the telephone directory under “government”).

For general information about mosquito control, go to [Mosquito Control Projects and Districts](#) or contact the [Central Massachusetts Mosquito Control Project](#) at 508-393-3055 or the [East Middlesex Mosquito Control Project](#) at 781-899-5730.

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