



## **Environment & Labour**

### **WHAT TIRE PILE OWNERS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT WEST NILE VIRUS**

#### **Is my tire pile a mosquito-breeding site?**

Tire piles could provide suitable areas for mosquitoes to breed, including those known to carry West Nile virus. When discarded tires are allowed to accumulate even a small amount of water, they become attractive sites for mosquitoes to lay their eggs. For example, during the course of one season, thousands of mosquitoes can be bred from just one tire. If tires that contain mosquito eggs, larvae or pupae are transported, the potential to spread mosquito populations increases.

#### **How can I prevent mosquitoes from breeding?**

If a tire pile exists on your property there are a number of ways to eliminate mosquito breeding sites. Most importantly, standing water in the tires should be eliminated. This can be accomplished by properly storing tires under a tarp, and by making sure that rainwater does not accumulate. Further, breeding of mosquitoes on residential and commercial properties can be reduced significantly through non-insecticide means by reducing the amount of standing/stagnant water available for mosquito breeding (i.e., source reduction). Most mosquito species deposit their eggs in or near standing water and larvae develop to the adult stage in this environment. Although many people believe that a wetland, marsh, bog, etc. are prime mosquito breeding areas this may not be true. It is generally the stagnant water areas that are the result of human activity that are prime breeding sites.

Examples of general control measures for any property:

1. Dispose of tin cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots or similar water-holding containers that have accumulated on your property. Do not overlook containers that have become overgrown by vegetation.
2. Empty standing water from used or discarded tires on your property.
3. Drill drainage holes in the bottom (not the sides) of recycling containers that are left out of doors.
4. Clean clogged roof gutters on an annual basis, particularly if the leaves from surrounding trees have a tendency to plug the down spouts. Roof gutters are easily overlooked but can produce millions of mosquitoes each season.

5. Turn over plastic wading pools when not in use or change the water on a weekly basis. A wading pool becomes a mosquito producer if it is not used on a regular basis.
6. Turn over wheelbarrows and change the water in bird baths weekly.
7. Aerate ornamental pools, stock them with fish, or change the water week. Water gardens are fashionable but become major mosquito producers if they are allowed to stagnate.
8. Clean and chlorinate swimming pools or hot tubs that are not being used. Be aware that mosquitoes may even breed in the water that collects on swimming pool covers.
9. Use landscaping to eliminate standing water that collects on private and public property. Depending on ambient temperatures, mosquitoes can develop in any puddle that lasts more than 7 days during the summer.

### **How can I protect myself?**

It is not necessary to limit any outdoor activities. However, you can and should try to reduce your risk of being bitten by mosquitoes. In addition to reducing stagnant water on your property, make sure all windows and doors have screens, and that all screens are in good repair. If West Nile Virus is found in your area you may consider taking the following steps:

- \* Wear shoes, socks, long pants and a long sleeve shirt or other protective clothing when outdoors for long periods of time, or when mosquitoes are most active.
- \* If you are considering using an insect repellent please refer to the fact sheet from Health Canada

**NOTE:** *Refer to the safety tips as indicated in Health Canada's Information sheet "Safety Tips on Using Personal Insect Repellents". It can be found at <http://nile.healthcanada.net> or [www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pmra-arla](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pmra-arla). It is recommended that pregnant women not use products containing DEET and these products should not be used on infants.*

### **Who should I contact if I locate a dead crow or bluejay ?**

Enhanced surveillance of dead birds for West Nile virus is restricted to members of the family Corvidae (crows, blue jays, gray jays and ravens). Birds are to be reported to the local field office of the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources where staff will make the decision whether or not to pick up and send the bird to the Atlantic Veterinary College.

## **Where can I get information on West Nile virus?**

Nova Scotia Department of Health WNV Web site

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/health/westnile/default.htm>

1-800-430-9557 (Toll-Free Information Line)

For general information, visit Health Canada's WN virus website at

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pphb-dgspsp/wnv-vwn/index.html>

Pest Management Regulatory Agency:

### **Safety Tips on Using Personal Insect Repellents**

[http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pphb-dgspsp/publicat/info/repell\\_e.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pphb-dgspsp/publicat/info/repell_e.html)

Mosquitoes: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pmra-arla/english/pdf/pnotes/mosquitos-e.pdf>

Canadian Blood Services: <http://www.bloodservices.ca>

There are a wide range of resources available and a couple are listed below:

US Center for Disease Control West Nile - <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm>

The American Mosquito Control Association - <http://www.mosquito.org/>