

DELAWARE MOSQUITO CONTROL SECTION

FAQ #7. If I don't want to be exposed to mosquito control spraying, what steps might I take?

No matter what the scientific evidence indicates about the safety of the Mosquito Control Section's using modern-day mosquito control insecticides, nor no matter what learned professionals might say, there will probably still be people who for whatever reasons will still want to avoid having any exposure to our insecticides (and yet somewhat ironically, many of these same people will also want mosquito relief, if not openly seeking such, at least not objecting to such when it's achieved). But such desires for no spray contact or exposure are by no means insincere or completely unfounded. From a medical standpoint, there is a very small segment of the public who might be **hyper- or chemo-sensitive** to exposure to some of our insecticides (particularly for some of our adulticides, for which exposure is much more likely than having contact with our larvicides), resulting in allergic-like reactions for these people that might involve eye or throat irritation, sneezing, coughing or other symptoms – e.g. some people with asthma might be more sensitive here. Despite what the EPA has determined regarding the overall safety of our mosquito control products for a vast majority of the public, we recognize that there are a few individuals who might have mildly adverse physical reactions to the products we use, and as such we attempt to accommodate these individuals the best we can, while still delivering quality-of-life and mosquito-borne disease prevention services for the vast majority of the public.

We also try to accommodate to the extent practicable, in keeping with our best serving the needs of the general public, those **organic gardeners** or produce growers who by the conditions of how they want to grow or market their agricultural products try to do this in as pesticide-free manner as possible. And through the **Delaware Department of Agriculture** and the **Delaware Beekeepers Association**, we also have a working agreement and notification protocols with **commercial beekeepers**, whereby through some mutually proactive measures they can be kept apprised of our pending spray operations, to help avoid any adverse impacts to their beehives or colonies.

Individuals who for whatever reasons are still concerned about exposure to the insecticides applied by the Mosquito Control Section, particularly for adulticides, can take some common-sense steps to avoid direct exposure to our spray applications, such as temporarily leaving an area about to be sprayed, or by remaining indoors and closing doors and windows, plus shutting off window air conditioners, during and immediately after insecticide spraying. The general times and locations for knowing about the Section's pending spray operations can be determined through various media devices and other means as described in FAQ #6.

The Section will also consider special requests to establish a “**No-Spray Zone**,” where mosquito control adulticides (insecticides applied to control adult mosquitoes) are not applied to your location. Decisions on granting No-Spray Zone requests are made by the Mosquito Control Section in consideration of a citizen's or resident's **stated purpose**

for making such a request; whether such a request can be practicably accommodated by our application equipment and within our application operations; and whether not spraying your location will unreasonably deny your neighbors or your community of their desired mosquito control services. In regard to the last factor, **our possibly granting a No-Spray Zone will result in no mosquito control treatment either for your neighbors or other properties within several hundred feet of a No-Spray Zone's epicenter.** This then obviously in some situations could become contentious, and lead to some "neighbor problems" not always easy to resolve.

By our Spray Policy, requests for No-Spray Zones by citizens or residents living within an incorporated municipality (city or town), applicable only to use of adulticides, **must be made to the Mosquito Control Section by a municipal official** (on their constituent's behalf), with the municipality then obviously being in concurrence with such a request, and with the municipality also providing all the information required for the Mosquito Control Section to make its decision. As such, a citizen or resident of a municipality wishing to have a No-Spray Zone established around his/her residence or property should first contact an appropriate municipal official and obtain the municipality's support or concurrence. Conversely in unincorporated areas, citizens or residents wishing to request a No-Spray Zone, again applicable only to use of adulticides, may do so by directly contacting the Mosquito Control Section. In all cases for unincorporated areas, **only the actual property owner** can make the No-Spray Zone request (i.e. not a renter, tenant, vacationer, visitor, etc.).

Information requested to be provided in a No-Spray Zone request, whether coming from a municipal official for a citizen of a city or town, or from property owner themselves in unincorporated areas, is pretty straight-forward, involving items such as name, address, and phone number of property owner making the request; purpose for making the request; description and map showing property's location; names, addresses and telephone numbers of adjacent property owners; whether the request is for aerial spraying, ground spraying, or both; etc. It is necessary to complete a No-Spray Zone request application each-and-every year that such consideration is desired. This is because a property's ownership might change from year-to-year, or the desire or necessity for having a No-Spray Zone might also change from year-to-year, and as such **there will be no automatic carryover of a previous year's request for a No-Spray Zone.** It is the responsibility of the municipality or individual desiring a No-Spray Zone designation to provide such notice to the Mosquito Control Section in timely manner on an annual basis, which if at all possible should be made by March 1 of each-and-every year when such consideration is desired.

Based upon the information received, the Mosquito Control Section will then make an approve/no-approve decision within a few weeks of receiving the completed application form. In almost all cases, particularly when **a medical case of hyper- or chemo-sensitivity** is involved, the Section will try its utmost to accommodate the No-Spray Zone request, weighing the good that granting such a request will do for the individual making the request, versus what might be lost in the way of quality-of-life or public health threats to others nearby (in our not being able to treat adjacent or nearby

properties). This is by no means always an easy decision to make. And finally, in event of a **declared human health emergency** caused by outbreak of mosquito-borne disease, the Section reserves **the right to cancel any No-Spray Zone status** that it might have granted, and to proceed with undertaking whatever spraying might be necessary to protect the general public's health during a disease outbreak. However, the Section will attempt to provide advance notice of such cancellation to those people who might now have their No-Spray Zone status cancelled or temporarily lifted.

Additional information on how to request a No-Spray Zone can be obtained by contacting the **Mosquito Control Section in New Castle County** by calling **302-836-2555**, and in **Kent and Sussex Counties** by calling **302-422-1512**. An electronic application form for requesting a No-Spray Zone is also available on the Section's website at <http://www.dnrec.state.de.us/fw/mcnospray.htm>.