



## **FAQ 1. Why are the mosquitoes bad around my house? What can I do?**

Many adult mosquitoes around the home come from mosquito-production sites in close proximity to residential areas. To help minimize mosquito annoyances, homeowners should take steps to **eliminate or reduce standing and stagnant water** on or nearby their properties. Potential mosquito-production habitats include buckets, clogged rain gutters, corrugated drainpipes, poorly-drained flat roofs, old tires, abandoned swimming pools, neglected bird baths, depressions in tarps, bilge water in boat bottoms, flower pot saucers, garbage cans or their upturned lids, upright wheelbarrows, or any other types of containers that can collect and hold water for 4 or more consecutive days. In addition, any grading of topsoil for grass planting or following septic system installation should ensure that rain or sprinkler-system water does not become puddled for an extended length of time. Ornamental ponds can also breed mosquitoes, so ensure good flow or changeover of water with a fountain or filter to avoid stagnant conditions, or stock fish that eat mosquito larvae.

Mosquitoes can also breed in roadside ditches, wet woodland pools, or stormwater management basins where water is held for 4 or more consecutive days. In these situations, a homeowner has limited capability or legal inability to eliminate these nearby breeding sites and should contact the Mosquito Control Section to report such problem areas. The Section will try to physically eliminate the breeding habitats or to make the reported problem sites part of the Section's surveillance and insecticide treatment program.

Mosquito annoyances around the home might not originate from the immediate vicinity at all. Some mosquito species have flight ranges of up to 10-15 miles away from their natal sites in order to seek blood meals – saltmarsh mosquitoes are well-known for their long flight distances. A substantial amount of Delaware's saltmarsh mosquito production problems arise from Bombay Hook and Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuges, which potentially affect people in off-Refuge locations. It's only through good cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that we are able to spare many Delawareans from Refuge-produced mosquitoes. In such situations where a private landowner cannot do much to control the mosquitoes that eventually make it to his/her property, only the Section's intervention can help. When you have need **to contact the Mosquito Control Section** about a nuisance situation or a suspected breeding problem, in **New Castle County** or **northern Kent County** please call **836-2555** (our Newark field office); and in **southern of Kent County** or **Sussex County** please call **422-1512** (our Milford field office).

Since our field inspectors and surveillance/monitoring devices cannot be everywhere around the State at one time, we rely upon receiving public complaints to help us target where we might best spend our limited resources. Your call to one of the numbers above is an important, valuable way to help us to focus our response actions, and your situation will usually be verified as soon as possible through one or more of our field surveillance methods discussed in FAQ 3. For the most rapid response from our control program, and for our most accurately receiving and recording the information that we need, **we ask that you call us directly rather than first going through an elected official or third party.**

**One exception** to your first calling the Mosquito Control Section is if you **live in an incorporated municipality** and desire to request spraying for relief from biting **adult mosquitoes**, you must first **contact your appropriate city or town official**, since by our Spray Policy we only provide adulticide spraying services within a municipality only with official requests from the city or town. Additionally, for residential subdivisions in unincorporated areas, the Mosquito Control Section prefers to have requests for adult mosquito control services from local homeowner or civic associations on an annual basis.

Please understand that during periods of peak mosquito outbreaks, our agency may receive dozens of calls per day, which can amount to a backlog of hundreds of complaints in just a few days. When such problems pile-up, we are then forced to further prioritize where and when to perform mosquito control measures that will provide the most relief to the most people in the fastest time. As such, you or your neighbors might not always get as rapid a response as you might desire. We will continue to try to do the best we can with the resources that we have been provided to serve the people in the state of Delaware.