



Health

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE
Ashwin Vasan, MD, PhD
Commissioner

Waheed I.
Bajwa, Ph.D.,
M.Phil, F.R.E.S.
*Executive
Director, Vector
Surveillance and
Control*

Dear Cemetery Manager:

To prevent West Nile virus and other diseases spread by mosquitoes, the New York City Health Department is asking for your cooperation in removing standing water from your cemetery. Eliminating standing water is the most effective way to prevent and control mosquitoes since they need water to breed.

Section 151.03 of the New York City Health Code requires that property owners remove accumulated water from their property from **April 1 through October 31**. Failure to do so can result in summonses subject to fines.

In cemeteries, water in vases and other containers is the primary source of concern. While we understand that visitors often place flowers in vases on the graves of their loved ones, these containers can be a breeding ground for disease-carrying mosquitoes. To comply with the Health Code, you must:

- Prohibit the use of all vases that can contain water **OR**
- Fill all vases and other containers in the cemetery with sand or soil and monitor these containers to ensure that no water is accumulating above the surface of the sand or soil.

Other potential sources of mosquitoes include

- Ornamental lakes and ponds. Maintain these by stocking them with fish or by treating them with a Bti product (such as MosquitoDunks™ or MosquitoBits™)
- Water collecting in tree holes, on the roadway, in unused maintenance supplies, in lawn clippings, and elsewhere. Monitor these areas and remove standing water;
- Lawns. Take care not to overwater.

If the Health Department determines that spraying is needed to control high populations of disease-spreading mosquitoes, we may need to treat your cemetery. Pesticide application occurs at night and is applied by spray trucks along roads within the cemetery.

Please see the enclosed brochures for tips on getting rid of mosquito breeding habitats. If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Vector Surveillance and Control by email at mosquito@health.nyc.gov or find more information online at www.nyc.gov/health/mosquitoes.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Waheed I. Bajwa, Ph.D., M.Phil, F.R.E.S.
Executive Director, Vector Surveillance and Control