

## **MOSQUITO SPRAYING AND CONTROL**

The City of Petersburg conducts mosquito spraying operations during any month in which mosquito activity is detected and sufficient quantities of mosquitoes are active. Spraying normally occurs from April through October each year. Each season we spray from 25-28 times throughout the season. Once frost occurs the population is usually severely reduced and spraying will normally not occur again until the spring rains begin.

Petersburg has two misting units which are mounted in the back of a pickup and in the back of a 4 wheel Gator. The pickup drives on the main streets spraying while the Gator drives the alleys. Each time the spraying occurs all streets and all alleys are sprayed. The misting units are re calibrated each spring before spraying starts

The active ingredient used in our spray is permethrin which is an extract from the Chrysanthemum flower. This active ingredient is mixed with mineral oil for spraying. We purchase the product in a pre-mixed solution. This product kills ticks, mosquitoes, chiggers, mites, and 55 other types of insects on contact. Many area towns have sprayed malathion for years and the mosquitoes have become resistant to this insecticide. Therefore, we use permethrin.

Spraying is most effective when the mosquitoes are out from cover and actively flying around your home. Therefore, we spray shortly after dusk when mosquitoes are most active provided we have calm enough winds and no rain. This requires our workers to work overtime so many times we will give them their comp time the following day to offset the overtime spraying. Compensatory time is 1.5 times the hours they work as required by federal and state law. It takes two workers to conduct the spraying and approximately 2.5 hours each for them to cover the entire town.

When we are first alerted to the onset of mosquitoes we try to spray 3 times during the first week of the onset. We have found this to be most effective in knocking down the population to a tolerable level. We will never get a 100% kill rate each time we spray. After the initial spraying of 3 times we then monitor the mosquito activity to determine if we have to spray and additional 1-2 times to knock out the first onset.

You can usually count on a new onset of mosquitoes within about 10 days of a rainfall event. It can be a little sooner or a little later but 10 days is a good average for the new crop of mosquitoes after a rain. Spraying aggressively during the first week of the onset kills a lot of the female mosquitoes which then lowers the secondary hatch.

Our annual budget for mosquito spraying is approximately \$10,268.00 which covers the cost of the chemical, labor, fuel, and equipment costs. This is paid for by each utility account paying \$2.00 per month throughout the year. The average number of accounts paying this fee is approximately 428 accounts a year.

Each time we spray we cover approximately 65 miles of streets and alleyways throughout the town. Just because you don't see our workers doesn't mean we are not spraying. Or, you might see them on your street but miss that they sprayed the alley. The person spraying the street is not the same person that sprays the alleys so this occurs at different times of each night they are spraying.

We also put out another insecticide into standing water areas to help eliminate the hatching of mosquitoes. This product is in a donut form shape and lasts for several weeks in the standing water. It is known as a larvicide and prevents the mosquito larve from hatching.

Elimination of any standing water in your yard helps us reduce the mosquito population in town. Elimination of tires and any container that holds water over a long period of time also helps us in our efforts. Keeping tall weeds mowed eliminates daytime hiding areas for mosquitoes so we encourage you to help us keep the mosquito population down.

In years past many area towns hired aerial sprayers to fly over their town and spray various insecticides for mosquito control. Many sprayers left the area during the recent drought and it is very hard to find companies who do this work. Additionally, due to the high cost of insurance the cost of aerial spraying has become extremely expensive and therefore you rarely see aerial spraying anymore. The City of Plainview recently decided against aerial spraying when the quote was in excess of \$5,000.00 for just one fly over the town.

If you experience a large amount of mosquitoes near your home feel free to call City Hall at 667-3461 to report the problem. We can also tell you when we are next scheduled to spray.