

# Illinois agencies announce coordinated mosquito reduction strategy

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**SPRINGFIELD**– Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Acting Director Alec Messina and Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) Director Nirav D. Shah, M.D., J.D. today announced a plan to reduce the threat of mosquito-borne diseases in Illinois, like West Nile virus and Zika virus, by removing used tires from public and abandoned properties.

“Used tires threaten Illinois communities by increasing the risk of disease transmission,” said Illinois EPA Acting Director Alec Messina. “This collaborative effort between IEPA and IDPH will allow us to assist local governments most vulnerable to West Nile virus and the possible spread of Zika virus by removing prime breeding habitats for disease-carrying mosquitoes.”

Under the plan, Illinois EPA will remove used tires from certain locations across Illinois. The two agencies have divided the state into three priority zones for used tire removal. The zones are based on where Illinois would more likely see Zika virus, such as the southern counties that typically have hotter weather. Zone 1 is the highest priority area and is defined by a straight east-west line going through Effingham and areas south of that line. Zone 2 is the next highest priority area and is defined by a straight east-west line through Peoria south to the Effingham line. Zone 3 is the third highest priority area and is defined by the straight east-west line through Peoria north to the Wisconsin border.

Illinois EPA is identifying and initiating used tire removal actions for units of local government beginning in Zone 1. Illinois EPA will collect, transport, and properly dispose of used tires from public and abandoned properties. Additional activities planned by the Illinois EPA include close monitoring of regulated used tire sites located in Zone 1 and using larvicide to actively treat and mitigate known sources of improperly managed used tires.

In addition, the Illinois EPA and IDPH will enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement to allocate \$750,000 from the Used Tire Management Fund. This funding will enable IDPH to enhance statewide mosquito control activities related to West Nile virus, Zika virus, and other mosquito-borne diseases through activities associated with the improper storage, handling, and disposal of tires. “Removing mosquito breeding sites is a core component of our mosquito abatement activities and a primary way to prevent the spread of diseases like West Nile and Zika viruses,” said IDPH Director Shah. “This plan is an excellent example of cooperation among state agencies that will protect Illinois and its communities.”

Illinois EPA will announce collection locations and results at a later date. The Illinois EPA's Used Tire Program is funded by a \$2.50 per tire fee that consumers pay when purchasing tires at retail. Illinois citizens produce more than 14 million used tires annually.