

GEORGE LATIMER, Westchester County Executive

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AFTER ISAIAS, CLEAN UP CAREFULLY AND REMOVE STANDING WATER
Westchester residents reminded to take precautions against downed wires and mosquitoes

(White Plains, NY) – In the aftermath of Tropical Storm Isaias, County Executive George Latimer reminds residents to use follow Health Department advice to caution when clearing fallen debris and to remove standing water around their homes to prevent mosquitos from breeding and biting.

Westchester County Health Commissioner Sherlita Amler, MD, said: “Steer clear of any downed wires and report them to your municipality. If you plan to use a chain saw to clear up fallen branches, gear up first with a helmet, protective goggles or a face shield, earplugs and close-toed boots or shoes with long pants. Never fuel a hot or running chain saw and start the saw at least 10 feet from the fueling area.”

The County Health Department reminds residents that generators should only be run outdoors away from open windows – never in a basement, garage, carport or porch, because generators produce carbon monoxide that can quickly become lethal indoors. Do not exceed the rated capacity of your generator. Overloading your generator can damage it and any appliances connected to it, and start a fire. If your generator has a detachable fuel tank, remove it before refilling. If this is not possible, shut off the generator and let it cool before refilling.

Amler said: “As we clean up, it is more important than ever to remove any standing water left over from Tropical Storm Isaias and any new rainfall that occurs, now that porches and patios, decks, driveways and backyards have become our new hangouts. Mosquitos are mostly a nuisance, but they can carry West Nile Virus and other diseases. To keep your family safer outdoors, pour out standing water from tarps, watering cans, kiddie pools and flowerpot drip trays. It’s also a good idea to wear repellents.”

Although there have been no reported cases of West Nile Virus in our area and the virus has not yet been found in mosquitos in Westchester this season, the County Health Department is highlighting these prevention recommendations now because August is when mosquitoes with West Nile Virus are usually identified.

Amler said: “Rain provides ideal breeding conditions for mosquitoes that can carry the virus. Mosquitoes bite close to where they breed, which is why it’s so important to remove standing water around your home and to use repellents, especially from dawn to dusk, when mosquitoes are most active.”

The Health Department prepared for the mosquito season by educating the public through social media and our website. Throughout the season, the Department also traps and tests mosquitoes to track the presence of mosquito-borne viruses in the County. Last year, 10 local batches of mosquitoes had West Nile Virus out of 243 submitted for testing, with the first positive batch collected on July 24. West Nile Virus infection most often causes a mild or moderate flu-like illness, but can be more serious particularly for people 60 and older, and those with other health complications.

To reduce the chances for mosquitoes to breed and bite around your home, watch this brief video on the Department of Health website at <https://health.westchestergov.com/west-nile-virus> and follow these tips:

- Avoid the outdoors in the late afternoon and early evening when mosquitoes are active and feeding, or use insect repellents when outdoors during these times. Follow the instructions on the label.
- Adults can use insect repellents with up to 30 percent DEET on infants over two months of age by applying the product to their own hands and then rubbing their hands on their children. Products containing DEET are not recommended for use on children under two months of age.
- Wear long pants, long-sleeved shirts and socks when outdoors, especially in areas where mosquitoes are active and feeding.
- Check around your property for containers, ceramic pots or similar water-holding containers that should be discarded or turned over to prevent collecting water.
- Check and remove standing water from children's toys and play houses left outside.
- Remove discarded tires.
- Drill holes in the bottoms of all recycling containers that are left outdoors.
- Turn over plastic wading pools, buckets and wheelbarrows when not in use.
- Change the water in birdbaths at least twice weekly.
- Keep storm drains and gutters clear of leaves and debris.
- Even with the swimming season over, continue to chlorinate swimming pools, outdoor spas and hot tubs until properly winterized or drained for the season. Also, if not chlorinated, drain any water that collects on their covers.

Residents who notice large areas of standing water on public property can report them to the Westchester County Department of Health at (914) 813-5000.

For power outages, contact Con Ed at (800) 75-CONED; NYSEG electricity power outage: (800) 572-1131; NYSEG gas power outage: (800) 572-1121.

Contact United Way's helpline by dialing 2-1-1 for non-emergency services and information. The hearing-impaired can access 2-1-1 through 7-1-1.

About Westchester County

Westchester County, located in the heart of the historic Hudson Valley, covers 500 square miles and has a population of just under a million. Originally home to Native Americans, who were members of the Lenape tribe, it is today a rich mix of many cultures and landscapes. The County is a blend of bustling cities, quaint villages and picturesque towns as well as open spaces and a network of beautiful parks. Westchester is made up of 6 cities, 19 towns and 20 villages. Westchester County is known for top-notch public schools, and a high quality of life. The County is also an intellectual capital, boasting a highly educated workforce, competitive colleges and universities, Fortune 500 companies, world changing non-profits, and cutting-edge research centers. Westchester is led by County Executive George Latimer, who took office in January 2018 as the ninth County Executive. Using inclusion and openness as a foreground, Latimer is fighting to make Westchester a destination for all people to live, work and enjoy. Learn more about Westchester County by visiting www.westchestergov.com

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