

Town Health Officer News

Environmental Health News

Spring 2013

Training Survey Results

This spring, the Health Department conducted an online survey to determine where we should focus upcoming trainings. Fifty-six town health officers and deputy town health officers responded to the survey and the feedback was very helpful. Here are a few of the results:

- 62% of town health officers have served in their role for more than 4 years, 11% of those for more than 25 years.
- In the past year, more than 50% of health officers have used resources (forms, trainings, etc.) from the Town Health Officer website at least five times.
- 57% of health officers have participated in an online training.
- 89% of health officers have participated in an in-person training.
- The top three most requested trainings are in: rental housing, health orders, and pest infestations.
- 39% of towns have a town health officer and at least one deputy town health officer for additional support.
- 47% of health officers meet with their select board between 1–4 times a year

We thank everyone who participated in this survey. The Department of Health will continue to host practical trainings for health officers and your input allows us to focus our efforts.

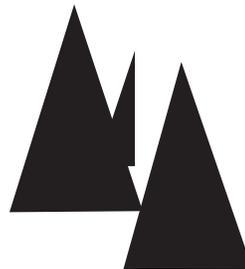
In response to this survey here are a few “*Did You Knows?*”

Did you know the Health Department has a web page entirely devoted to town health officers? This page contains all of our forms, a downloadable copy of the Town Health Officer Manual, and all of the past trainings we’ve done. You can access this page at: <http://healthvermont.gov/local/tho/tho.aspx>

Did you know that the three most requested training topics were held within the last year? You can view (and sometimes listen) to each of these training whenever you want by going to the training section of our website.

Did you know that your town has the ability to appoint a deputy town health officer to assist you in your duties? The appointment process is the same as for a town health officer and having a deputy health officer can really help if you go on vacation or if you have a conflict with one or more parties in an investigation.

Did you know that town health officers participate with their select board to form the town’s “Local Board of Health?” Having a good working relationship with your select board is very important. This board has the authority to issue health orders when voluntary compliance isn’t resolving a situation.



Summer is fun for people but ticks and mosquitoes like it too!

The Health Department would like your help spreading the word about how to prevent tick and mosquito bites. Ticks can carry the bacterium that causes Lyme disease, and mosquitoes in Vermont may be infected with West Nile virus or Eastern equine encephalitis virus. Preventing bites from these critters is among the best ways to prevent illness.

Inevitably, ticks and mosquitos will be pestering us this summer. With your help, the Health Department wants to ensure that Vermonters know how to protect themselves from bites. The department has a variety of educational materials that you can easily access and provide to your community. For example, you can order an informative booklet called "Be Tick Smart," as well as tick identifier cards on the department's website at http://healthvermont.gov/prevent/lyme/lyme_disease.aspx. All materials are free of charge. In addition, there are several fact sheets and flyers that can be easily downloaded and printed. Please post this information in places that are frequently visited, such as your town hall offices, general store, library, etc.

Both tickborne and mosquitoborne diseases have been reported from all counties in Vermont. Lyme disease is passed to humans from an infected deer tick bite, and there were over 500 cases reported to the Health Department in 2012. West Nile virus is passed from an infected mosquito, and has been causing illness in Vermont since 2002. Although only nine cases of West Nile virus have been documented by the Health Department, many milder infections probably go unreported. The nine confirmed illnesses occurred in five different counties, and about half of these illnesses were reported in the past two years.

For the first time in Vermont, Eastern equine encephalitis virus, passed through a mosquito bite, was found to be the cause of two infections in 2012. Unfortunately, both people died from the disease. Nationally, this is an uncommon but severe disease. Both people lived in northern Rutland County. While that part of the state is now considered to be at higher risk for infection with this virus, it's possible the disease will show up elsewhere in the state. That is why we encourage all Vermonters to reduce their chances of being bitten by mosquitoes.

The best way to protect ourselves from both tick and mosquito bites is to use insect repellents. You will find a flyer with guidelines for insect repellent use that you can download and print on the department's website <http://healthvermont.gov/prevent/arbovirus/index.aspx>. Please post the flyer around your town wherever you think is appropriate.

Also, starting in late June we'll be doing some limited mosquito surveillance for these diseases. In addition we'll be doing surveillance for human or animal cases. We will be posting our findings on our website and updating them regularly during the summer.

Let's all have a fun, happy and healthy spring and summer.



Prevent Lyme Disease

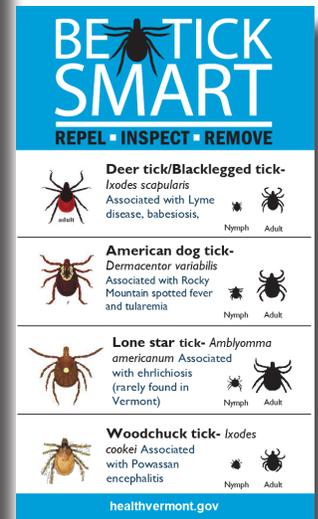
- Wear repellent
- Check for ticks daily
- Shower soon after being outdoors
- Call your doctor if you get a fever or rash

www.cdc.gov/Lyme



VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

CS232205-A



BE TICK SMART

REPEL • INSPECT • REMOVE

 Deer tick/Blacklegged tick-<i>Ixodes scapularis</i> Associated with Lyme disease, babesiosis.	 Nymph	 Adult
 American dog tick-<i>Dermacentor variabilis</i> Associated with Rocky Mountain spotted fever and tularemia	 Nymph	 Adult
 Lone star tick- <i>Amblyomma americanum</i> Associated with ehrlichiosis (rarely found in Vermont)	 Nymph	 Adult
 Woodchuck tick- <i>Ixodes cookei</i> Associated with Powassan encephalitis	 Nymph	 Adult

healthvermont.gov

These are a couple of the free items available online or at your local Health Department office.

Vermont Department of Health

P.O. Box 70 • 108 Cherry Street • Burlington, VT 05402

Health Officer Hotline:

1-800-439-8550

Recreational Water Training Opportunities

Cyanobacteria (Blue Green Algae)

Each spring, the Lake Champlain Committee (LCC) provides training to individuals interested in monitoring cyanobacteria blooms on Lake Champlain.

This spring, the LCC would like to offer training to town health officers and others that may be involved in recreational water management or response.

Since 2003, the LCC has coordinated a volunteer blue-green algae monitoring program in collaboration with the Vermont Department of Health to monitor designated locations along the lake's shoreline. LCC is expanding the program this year to train more individuals to identify blooms and gather water quality information from a broader geographic area. Additional information about the monitoring program can be found at: www.lakechamplaincommittee.org/get-involved/volunteers/bgamonitors/

Town health officer involvement in the monitoring program would be greatly appreciated. If you are interested, please contact Andy Chevrefils of the Vermont Department of Health at: 802-951-0114 or andrew.chevrefils@state.vt.us

Need Help?

Did you know that the town health officers have an active email list serve? This list serve connects THOs from all over the state and allows the Health Department staff to answer any technical questions quickly. We strongly encourage all town health officers and deputy town health officers to join. It's not only a great resource for you to help each other, but it allows us to send out news, updates and training notices. To have your email added to the list, please contact Marielle Strong at marielle.strong@state.vt.us.

Find us on Facebook & Twitter!

Keep up to speed with the latest news from the Department of Health by going to www.facebook.com/HealthVermont and <http://twitter.com/healthvermont>.

Most of our district offices have Facebook pages with local information. Find your local office at http://healthvermont.gov/interactive_media.aspx.

Public Swimming Area Management

On Tuesday, June 4, The Lake Champlain Basin Program, Lake Champlain Committee, Vermont's departments of Forests, Parks and Recreation, Environmental Conservation, and Health will present topics involving ecological and management issues for parks and recreation professionals.

The intent of this training is to establish a relationship and begin a discussion among public lakefront recreation providers to move forward collectively managing the recreational use of the lake. We will start by learning the most up to date information about the health of Lake Champlain based on The State of The Lake report published by The Lake Champlain Basin program in 2012. Knowing this information allows parks and recreation management to plan a reasonable response, mitigate problems and communicate to staff members and the general public.

This training will be best for town health officers with public swimming areas on Lake Champlain in their jurisdictions. If you would like to sign up for the training, please contact Rob Peterson at (802) 879-5686 or Robert.Peterson@state.vt.us

Health Department Local Offices

<i>Barre</i> 479-4200	<i>Middlebury</i> 388-4644	<i>St. Albans</i> 524-7970
<i>Bennington</i> 447-3531	<i>Morrisville</i> 888-7447	<i>St. Johnsbury</i> 748-5151
<i>Brattleboro</i> 257-2880	<i>Newport</i> 334-6707	<i>Springfield</i> 885-5778
<i>Burlington</i> 863-7323	<i>Rutland</i> 786-5811	<i>White River Jct.</i> 295-8820

Vermont Department of Health

P.O. Box 70 • 108 Cherry Street • Burlington, VT 05402

Health Officer Hotline:

1-800-439-8550

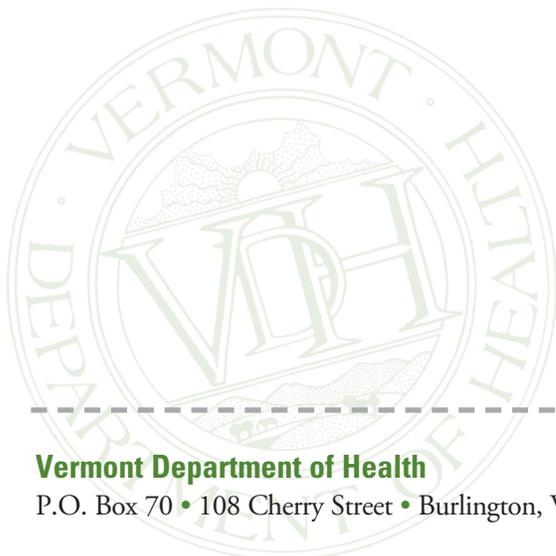
Healthy Homes Funding Available to Help Vermonters

The Vermont Housing & Conservation Board (VHCB) received a three-year Healthy Homes Production Grant from HUD to fund the Vermont Healthy Homes program. The program will partner with the state's network of non-profit housing groups and other organizations to identify and remediate housing-related health and safety hazards in units that serve low-income residents.

VHCB's primary implementation partners for Vermont Healthy Homes are the five housing trust/home ownership centers around the state. Each will perform the following activities, and the referral of homes by other organizations is encouraged:

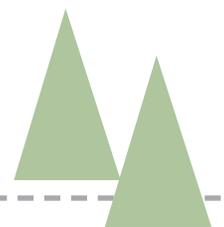
- a. Determine income eligibility and enroll units and families.
 - a) Eligible households have incomes at 80% AMI (Area Median Income) or lower.
 - b) Eligible homes include owner-occupied homes, units in multi-family buildings, and non-public affordable housing units.
- b. Assess homes and apartments using holistic approaches that conform to the intent of HUD's Healthy Homes Rating Tool. Over the course of the Vermont Healthy Homes program, VHCB will work with partners to adapt the HUD rating tool to the range of situations and housing stock in Vermont.
- c. Prioritize the health and safety hazards found in a home to identify the potential problems to be ameliorated. Remediation strategies will be guided by the HUD Healthy Homes Reference Manual and will focus on correcting physical deficiencies in the home.
- d. Work with homeowners to solicit quotations from contractors and perform the agreed-upon improvements.

For information about the program, contact:	To refer homes to VHCB's primary partners, contact:		
Marc Companion, Program Manager Vermont Housing & Conservation Board Phone: 802-828-2423	Central Vermont Community Land Trust	Pattie Dupuis	802-476-4493 x 215
	Champlain Housing Trust	Becca McNamara	802-527-2361 x 105
	Gilman Housing Trust / Rural Edge	Mandy Mitchell	802-535-3555 x 1300
email: marc@vhcb.org	NeighborWorks of Western Vermont	Lynnette Over	802-438-2303 x 210
	Windham-Windsor Housing Trust	Tawny Staskunas	802-246-2116



Vermont Department of Health

P.O. Box 70 • 108 Cherry Street • Burlington, VT 05402



Health Officer Hotline:

1-800-439-8550