

## **Health & Sanitation Board of Health**

In 2005 the Commonwealth of Massachusetts implemented many new Board of Health responsibilities, especially pertaining to emergency preparedness. Although the tasks and responsibilities have increased, the Chilmark Board of Health has adapted its schedule to accommodate the additional workload. We continue to monitor and test beaches, sample public water systems, inspect restaurants and continue to provide public health nursing services for our residents.

**Cape and Islands Coalition:** Every Board of Health in the Commonwealth has been asked to prepare plans and establish protocols for the eventuality of a pandemic influenza. In response to this vital need, the town of Chilmark has joined with a coalition of Boards of Health in the Cape and Islands to prepare plans that allow for the mass vaccination or dispensing of medication to our population. This Cape and Islands Coalition of Health Agents has been able to secure valuable assets to assist the town in preparing for public health emergencies. In 2005 each town in the coalition received a laptop computer, printer, air cards, fax machine and portable communication radios. This equipment is to aid in creating a formal system of communication between towns and other coalitions in the state, in an effort to respond quickly to public health emergencies. Local public health plans must include planning for all-hazards public health preparedness and response for chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive events, and natural disasters. Local Boards of Health are required to be trained in the following areas;

HHAN System	Risk Communications
Hazardous Materials	Personal Protective Equipment
OSHA	Incident Command (ICS)
National Incident Mgmt. Systems (NIMS)	

**Flu Clinics:** In an effort to prepare for a possible emergency vaccine dispensing event, the Island towns have been working collaboratively in dispensing flu vaccine regionally. The Board of Health wants to thank our public health nurses for their willingness to work collaboratively with other nursing providers on the island, in an effort to bring the flu clinics to our residents. We also thank our residents who traveled to other towns this year to receive flu shots.

**Public Health:** The Board of Health provides health services through Martha's Vineyard Community Services, providing public health nursing and related services to the residents of the town. This includes flu vaccinations, blood pressure clinics, adult health visits, maternal and child health visits, and communicable disease follow-up visits. In addition to blood pressure clinics that are held at the Town Hall the first Friday of each month from 1:30 to 2:30 PM, we now provide a nurse clinic every third Wednesday of the month for residents who feel they need some medical attention, but do not need a doctor. If you are interested, or know anyone who may be able to use public nursing services such as in-home health visits, please contact the Board of Health office for more information. The Board of Health continues to monitor drinking water quality at the Chilmark School, Library, and the Community Center as required. The following beaches continue to be tested weekly and meet water quality standards; Menemsha, Squibnocket, Lucy Vincent, and Chilmark Pond.

If any resident is interested in testing their private drinking water, test samples can be taken to the Wampanoag Water Testing Lab in Aquinnah. Anyone interested in doing so should contact the lab directly.

The Board of Health would like to remind all citizens of the importance of taking precautions against tick-borne disease. You should become familiar with the symptoms of all tick-borne diseases and seek medical attention immediately if you develop symptoms. The Board of Health has printed information

available by request for; Lyme Disease, Babesiosis, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, Tularemia, and Human Granulocytic Ehrlichiosis (HGE). These diseases can be treated and cured.

**Septic System Repair Program:** For those who qualify, the Town of Chilmark provides a low interest loan program for septic system repairs. If you are interested in this program, a septic design must first be submitted to the local Board of Health to obtain permitting and construction approval that meet the specific guidelines of the program. If you would like more information please contact the local Board of Health office.

**Chilmark Drop-off Facility:** Now that the landfill has been capped the town of Chilmark provides a new drop-off facility on Tabor House Road. We have installed a new building, that includes electricity and a telephone, to house the landfill attendant. Please be reminded that the Chilmark drop-off facility does not accept hazardous waste products. All hazardous waste must be taken to the Edgartown Refuse District drop-off location across from the airport road. The schedule is every third Saturday in May, July, August and October.

The Board would like to thank Alex Preston and Frank Fenner who currently serve as Chilmark Representatives to the Martha's Vineyard Refuse District.

**Fuel Tanks:** The Board of Health would like to remind all property owners of the importance of maintaining all heating oil tanks and other fuel and gasoline containers. Each year the Board of Health and Fire Department are involved in liquid fuel releases to private property by tanks which have leaked as a result of a faulty tank, or connection. If your fuel tank is buried it may be impossible to detect a leak. When an underground storage tank or connected piping leaks, the clean-up can be costly. Often homeowner's insurance policies contain an exclusion which results in clean-up costs not being eligible for insurance reimbursement. Also, the sale of property often calls for removal of underground tanks, as part of the requirements imposed by a lending bank. The Board of Health strongly recommends having all fuel storage tanks thoroughly inspected on a regular basis.

**Statistics:** During the year the Board of Health processed 56 disposal works applications, 26 well permits, 22 food establishment permits, three tobacco sale permits, 13 septic installers permits, and 102 pump-out permits. The Board also reviewed 19 septic system inspection reports. The Board of Health meets every 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday each month and welcomes your attendance and input.

Sylvia Yeomans, Health Inspector/Administrator to the Board of Health, has actively participated in continuing education in 2005, and continues to carry out daily responsibilities with professional competence. Please contact Sylvia with any questions or concerns. Office hours are 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Inspections and percolation tests are performed on Tuesday and Thursday. Beginning in July 2006, office hours will be 9:00 to 1:30 Monday through Friday.

Respectfully submitted,

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