



MVCAC
Mosquito and Vector Control Association of California

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Mosquito Control is Key to Preventing the Spread of Zika Virus

Local mosquito control agencies will continue to employ protection and prevention methods to ensure lowest level of public health threat.

SACRAMENTO, FEBRUARY 8, 2016 – As Zika virus spreads through the Americas, it is important to understand the reality of California’s exposure to the virus and the measures state and local vector control districts take to shield more than 38 million residents from this and other mosquito transmitted diseases.

Zika virus has federal, state, and local health agencies at an increased level of alertness as they inform U.S. residents about how the virus spreads and the risk of disease, areas where Zika virus is being transmitted, symptoms to look out for, and how to protect oneself from being bitten by mosquitoes.

California has a long history of established mosquito control. Although one imported infection with Zika virus was confirmed in California last week, it has not been transmitted locally. Two species of mosquitoes, *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus* can transmit the virus. These mosquitoes are not native to California but have been introduced into 12 counties in the state.

“As it stands now, Californians are at a very low risk of being exposed to the Zika virus. The invasive *Aedes* mosquitoes are not typically found in high concentrations throughout the state, further minimizing the risk to residents. In addition, there have been no secondary cases of dengue or chikungunya viruses transmitted by these *Aedes*, despite large on-going pandemics and numerous introductions into California by travelers. Although, as with any public health threat, residents need to continue doing their part to protect themselves and their communities by maintaining their properties, eliminating standing water, and being aware of the striped *Aedes* mosquitoes that are notorious for biting in the day time,” said Bill Reisen, Professor Emeritus, University of California, Davis.

Vector control agencies in California aggressively combat threats to public health with their integrated programs. The Mosquito and Vector Control Association of California (MVCAC) supports more than 65 local vector control districts that continuously battle threats such as West Nile virus and other mosquito-borne diseases.

These districts work closely with state agencies such as the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and the University of California to keep residents safe from emerging diseases. This is not limited to Zika but also a number of life-threatening diseases including chikungunya and dengue, all of which are caused by viruses which are transmitted by invasive *Aedes* mosquitoes. Although these

diseases have not yet been transmitted in California, local agencies are diligently working to prevent this from occurring.

Additionally, adequately funded mosquito and vector control, disease surveillance, and public awareness programs, coupled with best management practices on public and private lands, are the best ways to prevent transmitted diseases borne by mosquitoes and other vectors.

“The MVCAC and local districts will remain alert as we track Zika and all other mosquito-borne viruses that can cause human disease. As always, we will continue to educate residents about the most effective methods of preventing bites from mosquitoes and do our best to protect public health. Controlling invasive *Aedes* mosquitoes can only be accomplished by a community effort. We ask for everyone’s help in removing sources of standing water from their property, no matter how small,” said Kenn Fujioka, President of the Mosquito and Vector Control Association of California.

- For additional information on the Zika virus:
<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Pages/Zika.aspx>
- Travelers should refer to the CDC’s Travel Advisories: <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/>
- To minimize exposure to mosquito bites:
 1. **When outdoors:**
 - a. Apply insect repellent containing DEET, picaradin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535 according to label instructions. Repellents keep mosquitoes from biting. DEET can be used safely on infants and children 2 months of age and older.
 - b. Dress in long sleeves and pants.
 2. **At home:**
 - a. Install or repair screens on windows and doors.
 - b. Empty all sources of standing water on your property, including in flower pots, old car tires, and buckets. Remember: invasive *Aedes* can lay their eggs in very small sources of water, like a bottle cap. If you are being bitten by mosquitoes during the day, please contact your local mosquito and vector control agency.

To increase awareness and enforce prevention and control programs statewide, the MVCAC provides support to more than 65 districts throughout California. As a result, approximately half the land area and 85 percent of California’s population are within the boundaries of a mosquito control program.

The MVCAC represents special districts, other subdivisions of local government, and the state of California which are responsible for mosquito and vector control, surveillance of WNV and other vector-borne diseases, as well as public education programs to help Californians protect themselves from

disease. The MVCAC advocates safe, effective, and environmentally friendly methods of mosquito and vector control.

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