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# SAFETY ALERT

No. 04-07

Preventing Mosquito-Borne Diseases

July 2004 (Rev 08/18)

Los Angeles Unified's Office of Environmental Health & Safety is reminding staff and the community to protect themselves and their families from mosquito bites. Mosquitoes spread serious diseases like West Nile Virus, Zika and St. Louis Encephalitis, so it is important to take actions to eliminate conditions that support mosquito breeding.

## Background

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health reports that the West Nile Virus is spread to humans most commonly through the bite of a mosquito which has been infected with the virus. Most mosquitoes do not carry the virus, and the risk of serious human illness is extremely low, with more than 80% of those exposed to the virus experiencing no symptoms at all. Those that develop symptoms may experience headaches, fever, body aches, skin rash or swollen lymph glands. Staff and students who suspect they may be infected should be referred to their physician or a public health clinic. Saint Louis Encephalitis is in the same virus family as West Nile and shares similar symptoms.



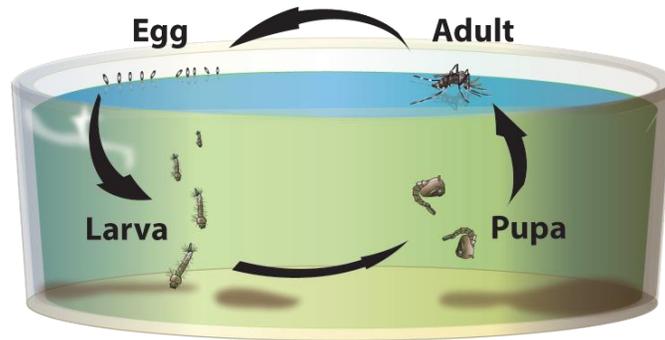
The Zika virus is also a threat to Los Angeles County residents. Since Zika began spreading throughout Latin America, over 100 Los Angeles County residents have been infected during travels to an area with a Zika outbreak-primarily Mexico and Central and South America. When a pregnant woman is infected with the Zika virus, serious birth defects can occur, including a baby being born with microcephaly, a small head due to abnormal brain development. Although Zika is not currently being spread in Los Angeles County, the mosquitoes that can transmit Zika have been found in many areas of the county.

## Immediate Actions to Minimize Exposure to Mosquitoes

1. Remove all stagnant water sources to eliminate mosquito breeding. Even shallow water sources created by leaking faucets or air conditioning units, fountains and pet dishes can support the breeding of mosquitoes. Tip and toss containers that hold water where mosquitoes can lay their eggs.
2. Minimize outdoor activities in areas where mosquitoes are active during the hours of dusk and dawn. If outdoors during these periods, wear protective clothing such as long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
3. Apply insect repellents in strict compliance with instructions on the label.
4. Be vigilant of indoor sources of stagnant water. Over watered indoor plants and science experiments involving water may create an environment that could harbor mosquitoes.

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Mosquitoes can live and complete their life cycle indoors or outdoors, wherever standing water can be found. And they can complete their life cycle in about a week!



### Immediate Actions When Dead Birds Are Found

West Nile Virus and Saint Louis Encephalitis survive in nature in birds and are transmitted by mosquitoes that feed on infected birds. If a dead bird is discovered on school grounds, the following procedure should be followed:

1. Note the condition and description of the bird carcass, e.g., condition, color, size, etc. This information will be necessary for reporting purposes.
2. Use rubber gloves or a plastic bag to pick up the bird carcass. Do not handle dead birds with bare hands. Double bag and properly seal the bags. Gloves or any other items in contact with the carcass should also be double bagged.
3. Thoroughly wash your hands after handling the carcass.
4. Immediately call the California Department of Public Health West Nile Virus Hotline at (877) 968-2473. The Hotline Operator will ask questions regarding the bird's appearance and condition. They will determine if the bird will be tested for West Nile Virus and provide further instructions on what to do with the carcass. Not all bird carcasses will be picked up for testing.

### Additional Resources

Mosquito issues at schools and offices should be reported to the Maintenance and Operations Branch Service Call Hotline at (213) 745-1600. See the attached *Maintenance Guidelines for Mosquito-Free School Site*.

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health's "It's Not Just A Bite" campaign aims to educate people about mosquito-borne disease and how they can protect themselves and their communities from these threats. Learn more at <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Mosquito-Borne-Disease.htm>.

For assistance with mosquito issues at your home, you may contact one of the Vector Control Agencies found at <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/vet/docs/2015MapListLACountyVectorControlAgencies.pdf>.

For more information on the invasive Aedes Mosquitoes recently publicized in the media, visit <https://www.glacvcd.org/vector-information/mosquitoes/invasive-mosquitoes/>.

Inquiries may be directed to the Office of Environmental Health and Safety at (213) 241-3199. Medical questions may be directed to Student Medical Services at (213) 202-7584.

*\*Information used in this Safety Alert was provided by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health and the Greater Los Angeles County Vector Control District.*

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DISTRIBUTION: Schools and Offices

# KEEP ZIKA OUT OF SCHOOLS

## MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES FOR A MOSQUITO-FREE SCHOOL SITE

### For: Custodial, HVAC, Electrical, Landscaping Departments

Due to increased incidence of invasive *Aedes* species mosquitoes ON school property, the Greater Los Angeles County Vector Control District strongly urges schools to implement the following WEEKLY INSPECTION & CORRECTION recommendations immediately. Keeping your school clear of standing water will prevent mosquitoes that can carry Zika and keep your students safe.

#### CUSTODIAL

- Ensure trash receptacles do not hold water. Drill drain holes as needed
- Remove leaves/debris from roof gutters *at least* once per month
- Do not store buckets/containers outdoors where rainwater can collect
- Check tarps after every rain for water accumulation
- Check for and remove all trash – even bottle caps – that can hold water and breed mosquitoes
- Ensure water fountains and spigots do not leak or cause water to collect
- Keep floor drains clear
- Watch for and remove indoor water in plant saucers, decorative pots, vases, etc. **These require permanent removal.**
- Remove and recycle all old tires



#### HVAC & ELECTRICAL

- HVAC drip pans must not be allowed to hold water for more than 96 hours
- Route condensation to gravel-filled infiltration basin. Maintain to ensure infiltration
- Check basement drains and remove standing water weekly
- Check all below-ground vaults for standing water, and ensure complete drainage



#### LANDSCAPING

- Check all landscape irrigation equipment and repair leaks
- Chain link fence posts must have caps to keep water out
- Ensure valve boxes do not hold water
- Prevent overwatering of lawns and runoff into gutters
- Ensure equipment is stored out of rain and cannot accumulate water
- Drain boxes/sumps MUST drain COMPLETELY at all times
- Keep debris/leaf litter out of gutters and flow-through drains



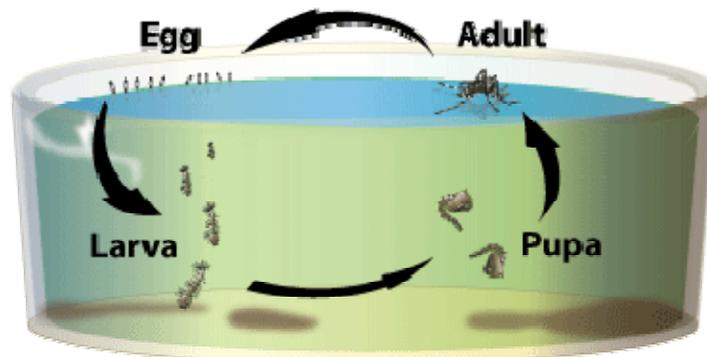
## SCHOOL-SITE BMPs

- Stormwater BMPs designed to hold water must be sealed to prevent mosquito entry
- Rain barrels must be tightly sealed at all entrances with 1/16<sup>th</sup> inch wire mesh. Water in rain barrels should be used promptly, and emptied completely between rain events
- Vacuum on-site BMPs weekly to remove water. Modify to encourage infiltration if at all possible
- Cisterns must be tightly sealed to prevent mosquito entry



## THE CHALLENGE

Mosquitoes develop from egg to adult in 5-7 days. Female mosquitoes lay eggs in or at the edges of water-filled containers. Eggs from *Aedes* mosquitoes can remain alive **for years** on the sides of containers, vaults, plant saucers, and trashcans and will hatch the next time they are flooded with water.



The Greater Los Angeles County Vector Control District (GLACVCD) wants to ensure your school site is free of mosquitoes all year long. GLACVCD offers free on-site inspection & training for school staff to ensure they know how to properly search for and control mosquito breeding on campus.



### Greater Los Angeles County Vector Control District

#### Santa Fe Springs Office:

12545 Florence Avenue  
Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670  
562-944-9656

#### Sylmar Office:

16320 Foothill Blvd.  
Sylmar, CA 91342  
818-364-9589