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<http://www.lausd-oehs.org>



# SAFETY ALERT

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No. 04-07

WEST NILE VIRUS PRECAUTIONS

JULY 2004 (REV 7/11)

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West Nile Virus activity is escalating in cities throughout the Southland as summer temperatures continue to rise. In recent weeks, the Greater Los Angeles County Vector Control District (GLACVCD) has confirmed eight additional West Nile Virus (WNV) positive dead birds and eleven more WNV positive mosquito samples bringing year-to date totals to twenty-one and thirty-six, respectively. This Safety Alert provides information regarding West Nile Virus, measures to minimize exposure to mosquitoes and the procedure to dispose of dead birds found in school yards.

The County Department of Health Services 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.

The following measures may be taken to minimize exposure to mosquitoes:

1. All stagnant water sources should be removed to eliminate mosquito breeding. Even shallow water sources created by leaking faucets or air conditioning units can support the breeding of mosquitoes.
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. Insect repellants may be helpful and should always be applied in strict compliance with instructions on the label.

If a dead bird is discovered on school grounds, the following procedure should be used for disposal:

1. Use rubber gloves or a plastic bag to pick up the bird carcass. Do not handle dead birds with bare hands.
2. Double bag and properly seal the bags. Gloves or any other items in contact with the carcass should also be double bagged.
3. Dispose of the bagged carcass in a secure refuse bin.
4. Thoroughly wash your hands after handling the carcass.
5. Report the finding immediately to the California Department of Health Services West Nile Virus Hotline at (877) 968-2473.

Additionally, the Maintenance and Operations Branch publishes a Pest of the Month Newsletter with timely information that is useful to schools regarding West Nile Virus, rodents, insects, and a host of other subjects. The newsletters can be found at <http://laschools.org/pom>. The following Pest of the Month Programs address West Nile Virus issues – 15, 17, 18, 19, 24, 25, 29, 32, 34 and 35.

Inquiries may be directed to the Office of Environmental Health and Safety at (213) 241-3199 or Pest Management at (213) 745-1435. Medical questions may be directed to Student Medical Services at (213) 765-2830.

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