



Los Angeles County West Vector Control District
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www.lawestvector.org

Public Health Advisory

Mosquitoes & Other Vectors in Los Angeles County

April 16, 2024

As we approach the end of the rainy season, residents are encouraged to dump and drain standing water in their yards, porches, and patios where water can accumulate. Heavy rain events have created areas of standing water that can develop into mosquito breeding sites. Mosquitoes can lay eggs in very small amounts of water. The entire life cycle, from egg to adult, takes as little as seven days.

Mosquitoes and West Nile Virus

West Nile virus (WNV) is the most prevalent and serious vector-borne disease in California. *Culex* mosquitoes can spread West Nile virus through their bites. These mosquitoes will feed on humans, birds, and other animals primarily at dawn and dusk. Eliminating standing water can help reduce mosquitoes in your community. The attached WNV advisory sign can be posted in parks and recreational areas to increase public awareness.

WNV infections are often mild or asymptomatic, but can lead to meningitis, encephalitis, and even death. There have been over 8,000 human WNV cases reported in California and 366 deaths since 2003. In 2023, there were 70 human WNV cases and 3 deaths reported in Los Angeles County.

Invasive Aedes Mosquitoes

Invasive Aedes mosquitoes are found throughout Los Angeles County. The yellow fever mosquito (*Aedes aegypti*) and Asian tiger mosquito (*Aedes albopictus*) primarily bite during the day. Eggs are laid in small, artificial, or natural containers that can hold water. Invasive Aedes mosquitoes have the potential to transmit diseases like dengue, chikungunya, Zika, and yellow fever. In 2023, for the first time in California, two cases of locally transmitted dengue in humans were reported. Prior to last year, only travel-associated infections had been documented in California.

Protection from Mosquitoes

- Wear EPA-recommended repellents, including DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535.
- Dress in long sleeves and pants while outdoors.
- Eliminate standing water in flowerpots, saucers, old tires, buckets, pet dishes, trash cans, toys, or anything that holds water for over a week.
- Properly maintain swimming pools, spas, and ponds.
- Install screens on windows and doors to keep mosquitoes out of your home.
- Clean rain gutters and cover openings in rain barrels with mosquito-proof screens.

- Report mosquito activity or request an inspection at (310) 915-7370 or online (www.lawestvector.org/service-request/).
- Some bird species, like crows, can become infected with West Nile virus. Report dead birds to the WNV Call Center at (877) WNV-BIRD or online (<https://westnile.ca.gov/report.php>).

Ticks & Lyme Disease

In California, the western black-legged tick (*Ixodes pacificus*) transmits the bacteria that can cause Lyme disease. Western black-legged ticks are found along hiking trails, parks, and other open areas in Los Angeles County, including the Santa Monica Mountains and Palos Verdes Peninsula. Visit www.lawestvector.org/ticks/disease-prevention/ for tips on preventing tick bites and Lyme disease.

Africanized Honey Bees

Africanized honey bees have been present in Los Angeles County since 1999. The District will remove non-structural beehives and swarms in our jurisdiction Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM to 3 PM with some height and safety limitations. Call (800) 825-3400 to request removal of a bee swarm or colony outside a home or business in your area.

Red Imported Fire Ants

The red imported fire ant (RIFA) is known for its aggressive behavior and painful sting. Residents, pets and wildlife may encounter red imported fire ant colonies in lawns, gardens, golf courses and parks. If red imported fire ants are suspected in your area, please call (310) 915-7370 for a free inspection.

Additional information can be found on our website (www.lawestvector.org) and in the attached “Mosquitoes and Other Insects & Vectors” brochures. These brochures and other publications are available for download at www.lawestvector.org/about-the-district/brochures-publications/. We encourage sharing these resources with staff, local residents, and on your website to help prevent the spread of vector-borne diseases in your community. Contact the District at (310) 915-7370 to request information, brochures, or participation in a public outreach event.

Governance

The District is governed by a Board of Trustees. The County Board of Supervisors and each city council within the boundaries of the District may appoint a single representative to the board. Board meetings are held once every two months on the second Thursday of the month. For more information, contact Catherine Taylor at ctaylor@lawestvector.org.

Sincerely,

Aaron Arugay
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