



# Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District

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## PRESS RELEASE

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September 20, 2017

### **INVASIVE AEDES MOSQUITOES DETECTED IN PALM DESERT**

*Aedes aegypti* now present in six Valley cities - residents urged to rid yards of standing water.

**INDIO, CA, SEPTEMBER 20, 2017:** The Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District has detected *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes in Palm Desert. District laboratory staff confirmed that the mosquitoes found were an invasive mosquito species capable of transmitting serious viruses such as chikungunya, dengue, yellow fever, and Zika. While these viruses are not currently transmitted locally, the District is taking steps to eliminate and reduce the spread of this mosquito throughout the Coachella Valley.

District teams will be conducting enhanced surveillance in the area to evaluate the extent of the infestation. Technicians will also be going door-to-door searching for standing water sources in people's backyard where this mosquito species commonly lays eggs. Technicians will educate residents on how to prevent breeding and also carry out control activities as needed. The door-to-door campaign will be carried out within the area bordered by Fred Waring Drive, Monterey Avenue, Avenida Las Palmas, and Highway 111. The location of the trapped mosquitoes in Palm Desert is close to the border of Rancho Mirage and therefore the inspection zone includes areas in both cities. Notices will be distributed to homes within the listed street borders to alert people about the presence of the mosquito and the upcoming control strategies. Door-to-door inspections are scheduled to begin Friday, September 22.

“This mosquito poses a health threat to Valley resident and visitors. The only way to eliminate this threat is community vigilance to removing standing water,” says Jeremy Wittie, MS, General Manager at the District. “The *Aedes aegypti* mosquito lives in people's yards and lays eggs in containers we provide for them from flower pot saucers to discarded tires. We urge people to take this seriously, go in your yards, search out these containers and get rid of them or clean them vigorously with bleach to kill the eggs.”

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Invasive *Aedes* mosquitoes are small (about ¼ inch), black and white, and feed almost exclusively on humans, biting aggressively all day long. To eliminate this mosquito people need to eliminate all possible standing water sources where mosquitoes lay eggs. The public plays a critical role in helping to control the spread of this mosquito population

*Aedes aegypti* was first detected in the Coachella Valley in the City of Coachella in May 2016 and has since been detected in Cathedral City, Indio, La Quinta, and Palm Springs.

Mosquito-borne virus activity among the Coachella Valley's native *Culex* mosquitoes remains high in the East Valley. So far this year, 137 mosquito samples have tested positive for West Nile virus (118 samples) or Saint Louis encephalitis virus (23 samples). Four samples tested positive for both viruses. Last year at this time, 101 samples tested positive for mosquito-borne viruses. District staff continue enhanced mosquito surveillance and control as necessary to reduce the number of mosquitoes and the risk of virus transmission to people.

#### **How residents can help reduce mosquitoes:**

- **Drain Standing Water.** Mosquitoes lay eggs in and near standing water. Limit the number of places for mosquitoes to breed by draining/discarding items that hold water, such as old tires, buckets, and empty flower pots. Check rain gutters and drains. Empty water from saucers under pots and water-holding plants such as bromeliads, and regularly change the water in root plant cuttings (both indoors and outdoors). Change water and scrub wading pools, birdbaths, and pet bowls at least weekly.
- **Install or Repair Screens.** Keep mosquitoes out with tight-fitting screens on all windows and doors.

#### **How residents can protect themselves from mosquito bites:**

- **Apply Insect Repellent.** Use a repellent with DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), picaridin (KBR 3023), oil of lemon eucalyptus [p-methane 3, 8-diol (PMD)] or IR3535 according to the instructions on the product label. DEET products should not be used on infants under two months of age and should be used in concentrations of 30% or less on older children. Lemon eucalyptus oil should not be used on children under three years of age.
- **Be Aware of the Peak Hours for Virus-Transmitting Mosquitoes.** Dawn and dusk are peak biting times for mosquitoes that can transmit WNV and SLE. Consider rescheduling outdoor activities during that time. Also, be aware of day-time biting mosquitoes and report them to the District.
- **Clothing Can Help Reduce Mosquito Bites.** Wear long-sleeves, long pants, and socks when outdoors to help keep mosquitoes away from skin.

Please contact the District at (760) 342-8287 to report mosquito problems, neglected pools, standing water where mosquitoes breed, and to request mosquitofish. Please report dead birds to the West Nile Virus Hotline at (877) 968-2473. If you are sick with fever, headache, and joint or muscle pain, contact

your health provider. Visit us online at [www.cvmvcd.org](http://www.cvmvcd.org) to obtain more information and submit service requests.

For information on mosquito-borne disease transmission to humans in Riverside County, go to [www.rivco-diseasecontrol.org](http://www.rivco-diseasecontrol.org). For the latest statewide statistics for WNV activity, please visit <http://westnile.ca.gov>. For information on mosquitoes and mosquito-borne diseases, go to <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/MosquitoesandMosquitoBorneDiseases.aspx>.

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