



Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District

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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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AERIAL APPLICATIONS IN MECCA TO TARGET INVASIVE AEDES MOSQUITO

Control efforts aim to reduce mosquito populations following increased detection of invasive mosquito in residential communities; residents urged to eliminate standing water in yards.

INDIO, CA, SEPTEMBER 10, 2018: The Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District will conduct larval mosquito control treatments by helicopter in Mecca where detections of *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes have increased. The invasive mosquito species was detected in Mecca in October 2017. Since then, the mosquito species has been detected in an area including about 900 homes. District staff have conducted about 1,600 door-to-door inspections, treating properties as necessary; distributed mosquito prevention and protection materials to residents, community centers, and health clinics; given community presentations; and organized a Community Block Party and Clean Up to educate residents and collect unwanted containers and objects on properties that could collect standing water. Despite efforts, invasive mosquito detections have increased in Mecca.

Five aerial applications are scheduled to take place on Saturday mornings between 4 a.m. and 7 a.m., weather permitting, starting on September 15 through the end of October. The application area will be within the borders of Lincoln Street, 65th Avenue, Johnson Street, and 66th Avenue. Aerial Control Notification postcards were distributed Friday and signs will be posted in the area this week. For details and updates to application routes, dates, and times, please visit the District website at <http://www.cmvcd.org/controlactivities.htm>.

The *Aedes aegypti* mosquito is of concern because it is capable of transmitting serious viruses including chikungunya, dengue, yellow fever, and Zika. While these viruses have not been transmitted locally by mosquitoes in California so far, local transmission can begin if an infected person returns to the Coachella Valley after traveling to an area where there is active transmission of these viruses. If that person is then bitten by one of these mosquitoes, here, that mosquito can then infect local residents.

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Aerial applications targeting immature mosquito larvae in the water help to reduce mosquito populations in areas that are hard to reach. Similar applications carried out in Coachella, Indio, and Key West (Florida), have been successful in bringing mosquito populations down quickly.

The application control product, VectoBac® WDG, is environmentally friendly, is approved for application on organic crops, and has no effect on people or pets at the amounts used for mosquito control. It is registered with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the California Department of Pesticide Regulation. The products are applied according to label instructions by trained and certified technicians. Although the District's mosquito control products pose low risk, some people may prefer to avoid exposure by staying inside during and for 30 minutes following the application.

The District recommends that people making plans to travel to areas with active transmission of mosquito-borne viruses protect themselves from mosquito bites by applying repellents containing EPA-registered ingredients, and wearing long sleeve shirts, pants, socks and shoes. Travelers who feel ill after returning from an area where mosquito-borne diseases are transmitted should contact their health care provider and protect themselves from mosquito bites. Residents can check mosquito-borne disease activity ahead of their travels by visiting <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>.

Community commitment to remove standing water sources inside and outside of the home is critical to reducing both *Aedes aegypti* and other disease-transmitting mosquito species from the Coachella Valley. Public outreach staff will be out in the community this month to give mosquito prevention best practices training to Coachella Valley Unified School District custodians and maintenance staff; a presentation at the upcoming Mecca-North Shore Community Council about the planned aerial applications, will be at the Flying Doctors Health and Resources Fair to distribute mosquito protection and prevention materials.

How residents can 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.
- **Report mosquito activity to the District.** Please contact the District at (760) 342-8287 to report mosquito problems, request mosquitofish, and report neglected pools or standing water where mosquitoes breed. Visit us online at www.cvmvcd.org to obtain more information.

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