

ZIKA: PROTECTING OUTDOOR WORKERS



About Zika

- Zika virus primarily spreads through the bite of an infected *Aedes* species mosquito (*Ae. aegypti* and *Ae. albopictus*).
- Zika can also be transmitted from an infected person to his or her partners during sex.
- A pregnant woman can pass Zika to her fetus, which can result in serious birth defects.
- Many people infected with Zika won't have symptoms or will only have mild symptoms. The most common symptoms are fever, rash, joint pain, and red eyes. Other symptoms include muscle pain and headache. Symptoms can last for several days to a week.



Workers at Risk

- Outdoor workers are likely to be bitten by mosquitoes.
- If Zika is in the area, they may be at higher risk for getting the virus.

Control and Prevention Employer Recommendations

- Train workers about the risk of mosquito bites and how to protect themselves.
- Train supervisors and workers on the symptoms of Zika.
- Provide insect repellents with an EPA-registered active ingredient, such as: DEET, picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus or para-methane-diol, or 2-undecanone and encourage their use.
- Provide workers with, and encourage them to wear, clothing that covers their hands, arms, legs, and other exposed skin. Consider providing hats with mosquito netting to protect the face and neck.
- In hot weather, encourage workers to wear lightweight, loose-fitting clothing. Take additional steps to prevent [heat-related illnesses](#) (e.g., drink additional water and take rest breaks).
- Get rid of or empty items that hold water (such as, tires, buckets, barrels) to reduce areas where mosquitoes lay eggs in and around the workplace.
- If requested by a worker, consider reassigning anyone who indicates they are or may become pregnant or who has a sexual partner who is or may become pregnant, to indoor tasks to reduce their risk of mosquito bites.
- Make sure that workers receive prompt and an appropriate medical exam and follow-up after a suspected exposure to Zika virus.
- Consider options for granting leave during the first week of illness.



**U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services**
Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention

Worker Recommendations

- Use insect repellents with an EPA-registered active ingredient, such as: DEET, picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus or para-menthane-diol, 2-undecanone. Permethrin can be applied to clothing and gear. Follow the label instructions.
- If also using sunscreen, apply it before applying insect repellent.
- Wear clothing that covers hands, arms, legs, and other exposed skin. Wear hats with mosquito netting to protect the face and neck.
- In warm weather, wear lightweight, loose-fitting clothing. Take additional steps to prevent [heat-related illnesses](#) (such as, drink additional water and take rest breaks).
- Get rid of sources of standing water (for example, tires, buckets, barrels) to reduce places where mosquitoes lay eggs.
- Talk to your supervisor about outdoor work assignments if you or your partner are pregnant or may become pregnant. See [Zika and Pregnancy](#) and [Zika and Sexual Transmission](#) for more information.
- If you have symptoms of Zika, see your doctor or other healthcare provider and tell them about your contact with mosquitoes.



Additional Recommendations for Mosquito Control Operations

- Workers entering areas with mosquitoes may need enhanced skin protection to prevent bites. Employers should consider providing additional protective clothing and/or use of insect repellents to fully cover exposed skin.
- Workers who mix, load, apply, or perform other tasks involving wide-area (or area) insecticides may need additional protection to prevent or reduce exposure to hazardous chemicals.
- Employers must comply with applicable requirements in OSHA's PPE Standards (29 CFR 1910 Subpart I), among other OSHA requirements.
- For all workers conducting mosquito control operations requiring respirators, employers must comply with respirator selection, medical clearance, fit-testing, and other requirements of OSHA's Respiratory Protection standard ([29 CFR 1910.134](#)).

Workers with Suspected or Confirmed Zika

- There is no specific medicine to treat Zika.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Drink fluids to prevent dehydration.
- Take medicine, such as acetaminophen, to reduce fever and pain.
- Do not take aspirin or other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs).
- If you are taking medicine for another medical condition, talk to your healthcare provider before taking additional medication.
- To help prevent others from getting sick, strictly follow steps to prevent mosquito bites during the first week of illness.
- To prevent transmission to partners via sexual contact, abstain from vaginal, anal, and oral sexual activity or use condoms. See [Zika and Sexual Transmission](#) for more information.

For More Information

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov/zika

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/outdoor/mosquito-borne/zika.html

Occupational Safety and Health Administration, www.osha.gov/zika/