



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CDC Issues Interim Guidance for Protecting Outdoor Workers from Exposure to Zika Virus

COLUMBUS - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, (CDC) issued new guidance and information on Friday for outdoor workers, mosquito control workers and business travelers to protect against occupational exposure to Zika virus. Ohio currently has 10 confirmed cases of Zika virus in returning travelers from Zika-affected countries. CDC is reporting 388 travel-associated Zika virus cases in 41 states and the District of Columbia, led by Florida with 84 cases.

“Workers who are exposed on the job to mosquitoes or the blood or other body fluids of infected individuals may be at risk for occupationally acquired Zika virus infection,” said Ohio Department of Health Medical Director Dr. Mary DiOrio.

Zika virus is primarily spread through the bite of infected mosquitoes. The primary mosquito that transmits Zika virus is found in the tropics and southern U.S., but it is not known to be established in Ohio. A “cousin” of the mosquito is found in parts of Ohio and may potentially transmit Zika virus.

Listed below are highlights on guidance for protecting workers from occupational exposure to Zika virus.

Outdoor Workers

- Inform workers about their risks of exposure to Zika virus through mosquito bites and train them how to protect themselves.
- Provide insect repellents containing EPA-registered active ingredients and encourage their use.
- Encourage workers to wear clothing that covers their hands, arms, legs and other exposed skin.
- In warm weather, encourage workers to wear lightweight, loose-fitting clothing that covers exposed skin.
- Get rid of sources of standing water whenever possible to reduce or eliminate areas where mosquitoes can lay eggs. Train workers about the importance of eliminating standing water at the worksite and eliminate water collection in trash containers by flipping the lid.

Mosquito Control Workers

- When working outdoors, follow the same precautions recommended for outdoor workers for protection against mosquito bites.
- Workers performing tasks related to mosquito control may need additional protection depending on their job tasks.
- Workers who mix, load, apply, or perform other tasks involving wide-area insecticides may need additional protection to prevent or reduce exposure to hazardous chemicals.

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Healthcare and Laboratory Workers

- Follow good infection control and biosafety practices.
- Follow universal precautions for potential blood borne pathogen exposure.
- In healthcare, standard precautions can be used to expand universal precautions by adding several protections, including expanded personal protective equipment (such as gloves, gowns, masks and eye protection). Standard precautions include hand hygiene and the use of personal protective equipment to avoid direct contact with blood and other potentially infectious materials, including laboratory specimens/samples.
- Laboratories should ensure that their facilities and practices meet the appropriate biosafety level for the type of work being conducted.

Business Travelers

- Follow CDC [guidance for travel](#) to areas with active Zika transmission.
- Employers should consider allowing flexibility in required travel to areas with active Zika transmission for workers who are concerned about Zika virus exposure.
- CDC recommends that pregnant women in any trimester not travel to an area with active Zika virus transmission.
- Even if they do not feel sick, travelers returning to the United States from an area with Zika virus should take steps to prevent mosquito bites for three weeks so they do not pass the Zika virus to mosquitoes that could spread the virus to other people.

Go to the ODH website at <http://www.odh.ohio.gov/zika> for more information about Zika virus and links to CDC resources including travel advisories for countries where Zika virus transmission is ongoing.

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Note to News Media – This news release contains highlights of CDC’s guidance for protecting workers from occupational exposure to the Zika virus. For CDC’s complete guidance, go to <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3855.pdf>