



# SAFETY ALERT

## Mosquito Protection for Employees

Zika is a disease caused by Zika virus that is spread to people primarily through the bite of an infected Aedes species mosquito.

Outdoor workers may be at the greatest risk of exposure to the Zika virus, which is primarily spread through the bites of infected mosquitoes. Here is information regarding the risk of exposure through mosquito bites and how to protect yourself. Symptoms may include fever, rash, joint pain, pink and red eye, muscle pain, and headache.

### How to Protect Yourself:

- Use insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin or another EPA-registered active ingredient on skin that is not covered by clothing. Always follow label precautions.
- If using permethrin, spray it on clothing and gear only—not directly on skin.
- Repellent should be applied at home before arriving at your worksite.
- Check with your doctor or healthcare provider before using any type of insect repellent.
- Wear clothing that covers all of your skin, including socks that cover the ankles and lower legs.
- In warm weather, wear lightweight, loose fitting clothing. This type of clothing protects you from the sun and provides a barrier to mosquitoes.
- Get rid of sources of standing water (e.g., tires, buckets, cans, bottles, barrels) whenever possible to reduce or eliminate mosquito breeding areas.
- If symptoms develop, seek medical attention promptly. Discuss any possible exposure to mosquitoes or infections spread by mosquitoes with a healthcare provider.

### Guidance on use of insect repellents for employers and workers:

- Always follow label precautions when using insect repellent.
- Use insect repellent containing an EPA-registered active ingredient. All of the EPA-registered active ingredients have demonstrated repellency, but some

provide longer-lasting protection than others. Research suggests that repellents containing DEET (N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide) or picaridin (KBR 3023) typically provide longer-lasting protection than the other products, and oil of lemon eucalyptus (p-menthane-3,8-diol) provides longer-lasting protection than other plant-based repellents.

- Permethrin is another long-lasting repellent that is intended for application to clothing and gear, but not directly to skin. Spray insect repellent (permethrin) on the outside of clothing, as it is possible for mosquitoes to bite through thin clothing.
- To avoid reaction to DEET or other ingredients in insect repellents, read and follow the directions on all insect repellents before use.
- Do NOT spray insect repellent on skin that is under clothing.
- Do NOT apply insect repellent to skin that is already irritated, or to cuts/lacerations.
- Do NOT spray aerosol or pump products in enclosed areas. Do NOT spray a pump or aerosol product directly on the face. First spray it on hands and then carefully spread it on the face (do not allow insect repellent to contact eyes or mouth).

### **Take extra precautions after heavy rains and regularly inspect outside your facilities:**

Some mosquitoes lay eggs above the waterline in places where water collects. After floods or heavy rains, the eggs hatch, and in a few days produce swarms of aggressive, hungry mosquitoes. Another wave of mosquitoes typically occurs 10 to 14 days after the rain stops.