

## Zika Virus Protection for Outdoor Workers

Outdoor workers may be at the greatest risk of exposure to Zika virus, which is primarily spread through the bites of infected mosquitoes.



Credit: CDC / James Gathany

Your employer should inform you about the risk of exposure through mosquito bites and how to protect yourself.

### Signs and Symptoms of Zika Infection

- Fever • Rash • Joint pain • Pink or red eyes
- Muscle pain • Headache

### OSHA recommends that your employer:

- Train you on how to protect yourself and about the importance of eliminating areas where mosquitoes breed at your worksite.
- Provide insect repellents and protective clothing for your exposed skin, and encourage their use.

### 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.

For more information:



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- Choose a repellent that provides protection for the amount of time that you will be outdoors.
- After returning indoors and before eating, use soap and water to wash skin that has been treated with insect repellent. Reapply repellent when returning outdoors or after eating.
- Wear clothing that covers all of your skin, including socks that cover the ankles and lower legs and hats with mosquito netting to protect the face and neck.
- 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.
- OSHA and NIOSH recommend that you talk to your supervisor(s) about any outdoor work assignment(s) or travel to Zika-affected areas if you are or may become pregnant, or, for males, if your sexual partner is or may become pregnant. Consult CDC information on Zika virus and pregnancy: [www.cdc.gov/zika](http://www.cdc.gov/zika).
- If you routinely work with insecticides to control mosquitoes, you may require additional personal protective equipment.
- If symptoms develop, seek medical attention promptly. Discuss any possible exposure to mosquitoes or infections spread by mosquitoes with a healthcare provider.

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