



**Merced County Mosquito Abatement District**  
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## **MOSQUITO ABATEMENT DISTRICT BEGINS MOSQUITO CONTROL OPERATIONS TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC FROM MOSQUITO-BORNE DISEASES IN MERCED COUNTY**

MERCED, CA– The Merced County Mosquito Abatement District (MCMAD) announces that they are beginning surveillance and control operations for mosquitoes that might be carrying West Nile Virus (WNV) or St. Louis Encephalitis Virus (SLEV). The District is targeting residential backyard sources such as neglected swimming pools and ornamental ponds. The District will be using aerial photography to assist in locating potential mosquito breeding sites.

Neglected swimming pools, ornamental ponds, or other cryptic backyard sources are responsible for breeding the types of mosquitoes that carry mosquito-borne diseases such as WNV and SLEV. According to Rhiannon Jones, General Manager of MCMAD, “This is the first time Merced County Mosquito Abatement has used aerial surveillance photography to assess the neglected swimming pool situation. In addition to having mosquitoes that carry WNV and SLEV, Merced County has invasive Aedes mosquitoes in the City of Merced. It is paramount that we take a proactive approach to control mosquitoes in individual backyards before the summer months when mosquito populations are at their highest.”

The District is recommending that property owners take responsibility for maintaining their swimming pools and ornamental ponds to prevent mosquito breeding. The public is asked to notify the District of any suspected or known neglected swimming pools. Mosquitofish are also available upon request.

Last year there were 577 WNV and 4 SLEV human cases as well as 41 deaths related to WNV in the state of California. “Mosquito-borne diseases like WNV and SLEV will continue to occur and Merced County is no exception,” states General Manager Rhiannon Jones. The California Department of Public Health’s annual human incidence report stated that Merced County had nine human WNV cases in 2017. Of that, eight were symptomatic, one asymptomatic, and zero deaths. The District anticipates more SLEV and WNV detections this year and would like to remind residents on ways in which they can help by taking the following precautions:

- **Drain** standing water. Mosquitoes prefer to lay eggs in stagnant water.
- **Defend** yourself against mosquitoes using repellents containing DEET, Picaridin, or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus.
- Avoid being outdoors when mosquitoes are present, typically **Dawn** and **Dusk**.
- **Report neglected swimming pools** to the District. *Anonymous calls accepted.*

To report mosquito-breeding problem areas and request service, Merced County residents should contact Merced County Mosquito Abatement District at (209) 722-1527 [main], (800) 622-3242 [toll], or visit their website [www.mcmosquito.org](http://www.mcmosquito.org).

For more information regarding WNV visit:

- <http://www.westnile.ca.gov/>

For more information regarding SLEV visit:

- <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/SLE.aspx> or <https://www.cdc.gov/sle/>

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