

# West Nile virus

List WNV hazards on site.

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## Explain dangers

Those who work outdoors in summer and early autumn can be exposed to West Nile virus. The virus is transmitted by mosquitos.

The chances of getting bitten by an infected mosquito are very low. Even if infected, most people don't show any sign of illness. About 20% of those infected develop West Nile fever.

The fever causes mild, flu-like symptoms:

- Fever
- Headache
- Nausea
- Body aches.

One in 150 infected people get a severe form of the disease. This is known as West Nile encephalitis or meningitis. It can affect your brain and the damage can be permanent or fatal.

Serious symptoms include

- Severe Headache
- High fever
- Neck stiffness
- Disorientation
- Shakes or convulsions
- Muscle weakness
- Numbness or paralysis.

### BREEDING GROUNDS

Mosquitos can reproduce where water stands for more than four days. On worksites, that means excavations, basements, and other low-lying areas.

Mosquitos can also hatch in equipment such as tarps, buckets, barrels, and wheelbarrows holding water. Even water-filled ruts in the ground can help breed mosquitos.

## Identify controls

- Empty equipment regularly.
- Discard tires, buckets, cans, and containers.
- Drill drain holes in containers that can't be thrown out.
- Clean out eavestroughs, storm gutters, and roof gutters.
- Check flat roofs for standing water.
- Fill in ruts and other depressions where water can collect.

### CLOTHING

- Cover up, especially at dawn and dusk when mosquitos are most active.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts.
- Wear long pants tucked into your socks.
- Apply insect repellent containing DEET to your exposed skin—never under your clothing.

### DEET

- DEET is the most effective insect repellent available. The more DEET a repellent contains, the longer it will be effective.
- A product with 6.65% DEET provides about 2 hours of protection. A product with 23.8% DEET provides about 5 hours of protection.
- Don't use products with more than 30% DEET.
- Stay on the safe side—use the lowest percentage of DEET you can get away with while still being protected.

## Demonstrate

With the crew, inspect the project for places where mosquitos can breed and dispose of any standing water.

Distribute insect repellent to your workers.