



Melissa A. Landín
Public Information Officer
City of Harlingen
118 E. Tyler Avenue ~ Harlingen, Texas 78550
(956) 216-5030
mlandin@myharlingen.us
www.myharlingen.us

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CITY OF HARLINGEN CONTINUES TO ENCOURAGE MOSQUITO PREVENTION, PROTECTION

The City of Harlingen is asking the community to remain vigilant when it comes to mosquito prevention.

In addition to being pests that disrupt outdoor activities, mosquitoes transmit the agents of serious diseases, including encephalitis, dengue, Zika virus and heartworms in pets.

“We want the public to take precautions in protecting themselves,” City Manager Dan Serna said. “Such a small insect can cause serious health issues. There are many things that can be done to address a mosquito problem. The No. 1 action taken should be source reduction – eliminating possible breeding areas.”

The City’s Environmental Health Department asks the public to take the following measures:

1. **Breeding Grounds:** Locate mosquito breeding grounds where mosquitoes are laying eggs. Common breeding grounds include water found in artificial containers such as cans, jars, old tires, boats, fountains, birdbaths, plastic pools, low-lying areas, bar ditches, retention pools, tree holes, cemetery urns and tall grass.
2. **Habitat and Sanitation:** Remove or eliminate as many breeding sites possible. Fill-in low-lying areas with dirt. Remove or maintain water containers, birdbaths, plastic pools, old tires, etc. Maintain the yard and trim tall grass.
3. **Chemical Control:** Pesticide spray for yards is sold at local stores in the form of fogs or mists.
4. **Physical and Mechanical Control:** A great deal of protection from adult mosquitoes can be achieved by excluding them with screens on doors, windows, vents and other such openings. Seal gaps around windows and door frames by caulking, weather stripping or tapping. Make entryways, porches and areas near structures less attractive to mosquitoes at night by using yellow (dichrom) outdoor lights rather than regular or incandescent light bulbs. Incandescent lights attract night-flying insects such as mosquitoes.
5. **Reporting Problem Areas:** Report increased mosquito activity and problem areas such as stagnant water and overgrown, weedy lots.

The City of Harlingen has health inspectors trained and licensed in vector control through the Texas Department of Agriculture. The City implements the TDA’s Integrated Pest Management Plan and the Texas Department of State Health Services West Nile Virus Public Health Preparedness, Surveillance and Response Guide.

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The City takes a proactive approach when anticipating mosquito activity after heavy rainfall.

1. Health inspectors apply larvicides in low-lying areas where waters collect using briquettes that cover a 10' x 10' area with a 30-day efficacy. Larvicides are also applied in response to vector complaints usually within 24 hours upon receipt.
2. Mosquito prevention information is distributed to the public.
3. As a final defense, the City sprays for mosquitoes.

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