

Guidelines on Mosquito Prevention for Contractors of Construction Sites

Mosquito bites not only cause itching or swelling but also transmit diseases. *Aedes albopictus* can transmit dengue fever and Zika virus infection. It breeds in small amount of stagnant water.

There is no effective vaccine for the prevention of dengue fever or Zika virus infection at present. The key to prevent transmission of dengue or Zika virus is to eliminate the breeding places of mosquito and protect workers from mosquito bite.

Under section 27 of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Chapter 132, Laws of Hong Kong), the person responsible for construction site is required to avoid accumulation of stagnant water in the premises. If the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) finds potential mosquito breeding places in the premises, notice may be served on the person responsible for the premises and failure to comply is an offence. The person responsible for the premises will be prosecuted if mosquito breeding is found.

The offences, upon conviction, are liable to a maximum fine of \$25,000 plus a daily fine of \$450.

Under section 6 of the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance (Chapter 509, Laws of Hong Kong), employers must, so far as reasonably practicable, ensure the safety and health at work of all their employees. In this regard, persons responsible for the workplaces are required to make suitable and sufficient assessments on the health risks arising from mosquito borne diseases, and to take reasonably practicable steps to mitigate the risks having regard to the results of the assessments, e.g. taking appropriate anti-mosquito measures.

The basic principle of anti-mosquito measures is to avoid accumulation of stagnant water. The FEHD advises contractors of construction sites to heed the following measures against mosquito breeding :

1. Appoint professional pest control contractors to carry out anti-mosquito measures whenever necessary.
2. Designate staff to conduct weekly inspection to the construction site to ensure the mosquito preventive measures are properly implemented.

3. Tidy up the construction site regularly (at least once a week), and check for any accumulation of stagnant water.
4. Store building materials and any receptacles that can hold water under shelter.
5. Install mosquito nets or screens when the room is not air-conditioned.
6. Fill up or wrap up the vertical poles of the bamboo to prevent accumulation of water.
7. Cover all containers to prevent water accumulation for mosquito breeding.
8. Dispose of objects that can hold water, such as empty lunch boxes, cans, disused articles and tyres, into covered container(s) and remove them from the site regularly (at least once a week).
9. Ensure trenches, lift wells, waste water treatment plants, water barriers, storage tanks, canvas sheets, abandoned tyres, building equipment, machinery parts, and other common water holding black spots are not accumulating water.
10. Carry out larviciding at mosquito potential breeding sources or breeding grounds that are inaccessible or difficult to be eliminated.
11. Take immediate actions on reports from workers on any mosquito potential breeding / breeding places.
12. Provide appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), e.g. respirator, impervious gloves and protective clothing, to workers for carrying out the mosquito control work.
13. Provide registered pesticides and equipment for workers to carry out the mosquito control work.
14. Make sure the pesticides are applied in accordance with the instructions on the label and Material Safety Data Sheet.
15. Provide effective insect repellent* that contains 2 0% or more DEET to workers, especially for those working in scrubby areas. Provide insect repellent with concentration of DEET up to 30% only for pregnant workers.
16. Provide training and updated information to workers on mosquito- borne diseases and relevant mosquito preventive and control measures.

* Please refer to the pamphlet "Proper Use of Insect Repellents" published by the Centre for Health Protection, Department of Health & the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department for more information

Further information:

In case of using insecticides at work, workers should have received relevant training and information on precautionary measures, and should follow the safety instructions accordingly.

Should you need further information regarding occupational health measures, please contact the Labour Department :

Telephone: 2852 4041 or

Email: enquiry@labour.gov.hk

For further information on dengue fever or Zika virus infection:

Centre for Health Protection Website: www.chp.gov.hk

24-hours Health Education Hotline : 2833 0111

For further enquiry on mosquito prevention and control in construction sites:

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department website:

www.fehd.gov.hk

Enquiry Hotline : 2868 0000