

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH BRANCH

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Preventing Zika Infection Among Workers

The continued spread of the Zika virus has spurred creation of new materials on protecting a variety of workers, including those who work outdoors or on cruise ships, and healthcare and laboratory workers.



The Zika virus is spread to humans primarily through mosquito bites, but the virus has been detected in body fluids including blood. Work-related transmission has been documented in a research laboratory setting via a needle stick. Healthcare and laboratory employers need to assess Zika risk and protect employees under their blood-borne pathogen exposure control plan.

Outdoor workers are at risk in areas with Zika. So far, that does not include California. In our state, Zika virus infections acquired from mosquitos have been documented to date only among people infected while travelling outside the United States (and possibly to Florida). For outdoor workers and workers who travel to Zika areas, employers need to inform them of the risk and provide them with the means to prevent mosquito bites and possible infection.

Many people infected with Zika do not know they are experiencing its mild symptoms. If a pregnant woman is infected, however, the virus can pass to her fetus and cause serious birth defects. CDC recommends that pregnant women not travel to areas where Zika is transmitted via mosquitos. CDPH's Zika website includes information for healthcare providers on what to do if they treat someone suspected to have Zika.

Available resources for employers and workers include the following:

- National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Zika web page
- NIOSH/Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Zika fact sheet
- CDPH Zika web page
- CDPH Zika web page for health professionals

Illustration: Zika is spread by the bite of an infected mosquito or exposure to blood.

Resources

[NIOSH Zika web page](#)

[NIOSH/OSHA Zika fact sheet](#)

[CDPH Zika web page](#)

Email Occupational Health Watch (OHW@cdph.ca.gov) with feedback or change of address.

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