



Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of the Marin/Sonoma Mosquito & Vector Control District?

What is a vector?

What type of services do you provide?

Is there a cost for your services?

How does the technician control mosquitoes?

What steps can I take to protect myself from being exposed to adulticides if they are being sprayed in my yard or neighborhood?

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Is there away to prevent and control mosquitoes in my backyard pond?

Can I put mosquitofish into the creek behind my home?

Does your District control rodents?

If I am experiencing a yellowjacket problem will the district come to my home?

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Does the District offer any types of informational presentations for community groups?

Q: What is the purpose of the Marin/Sonoma Mosquito & Vector Control District?

A: The MSMVCD was formed in 1915 in response to the public's need for mosquito control services. Our mission in to protect public health from mosquitoes and vector borne disease.

Q: What is a vector?

A: A vector is any insect or animal that may cause harm or transmit disease.

Q: What type of services do you provide?

A: The following services are available to Sonoma and Marin county residents:

- Mosquito control services for those residents experiencing problems or suspect a problem.
- Free delivery and in house pickup of mosquitofish for permanent ponds, troughs and water features.
- Eradication of in ground yellowjacket nests. Residents must know the location of the nest.
- Advice on rodent control; we **do not** conduct home inspections, baiting or trapping services. Presentations are given to groups on a variety of topics including mosquito control, West Nile virus and rodent control.
- Mosquito School presentations are available for grades k-8.

Q: Is there a cost for your services?

A: No, there is no cost for our services. We are an independent ‘special district’ which receives its funding through property taxes.

Q: If I call your office because I have a mosquito problem, what can I expect?

A: First, we request that you try to obtain a sample of the mosquito that is biting you. A sample enables the technician to confirm that the insect bothering you is a mosquito. Specific types of mosquitoes prefer slightly different types of water sources. The identification of the mosquito species helps the technician pinpoint the type of source that is producing the mosquitoes. Once the source of mosquito production is determined the technician will choose, the appropriate action to eliminate the problem.

Q: How does the technician control mosquitoes?

A: Our District utilizes a comprehensive Integrated Pest Management program which includes education, physical control, biological control and chemical control. In most instances mosquito problem can be remedied by simply eliminating the standing water; dumping and draining containers. Permanent ponds can be stocked with mosquito larva eating fish. There are times when the water will need to be treated using one of our least-toxic products. Material Safety Data sheets on all of the products we use to control mosquitoes and other vectors can be accessed via our website www.ms mosquito.com. If West Nile virus is found in the local adult mosquito population the use of adulticides (fogging) may be necessary. An assessment of the adult mosquito population as well as the risk of WNV transmission to humans are factors in the decision to spray for the disease. All mosquito control activities are conducted by state certified vector control personnel.

Q: What steps can I take to protect myself from being exposed to adulticides if they are being sprayed in my yard or neighborhood?

A: The District uses materials for mosquito control that have been evaluated and have shown to pose a very low health risk to humans, animals and the environment. While there is not a need to relocate while an application is taking place, people with chemical sensitivities or who have asthma may choose to do so. Please contact the District if you feel the need for further information.

Q: Is there away to prevent and control mosquitoes in my backyard pond?

A: Mosquitofish (*Gambusia affinis*) can be added to permanent ponds, water gardens and water troughs. These fish are natural predators of mosquito larva and have been used in California for mosquito control since the 1920’s. District personnel will deliver these fish directly into your pond for free. The fish are also available for pick up at our District office in Cotati.

Q: Can I put mosquitofish into the creek behind my home?

A: No, by law mosquitofish are not to be placed in any body of water that connects to a U.S. waterway, including creeks and streams. If you suspect that a creek may be breeding mosquitoes you can call our office and request an inspection.

Q: Does your District control rodents?

A: Our rodent program is strictly educational only. If you are experiencing a rodent problem you may contact our office for a copy of How to Prevent and Control Rats brochure or download a copy from our website. This brochure helps to identify areas around your property that may be attracting rats as well as the steps necessary to alleviate the problem. If the need for additional advice arises please feel free to contact the District.

Q: If I am experiencing a yellowjacket problem will the district come to my home?

A: Due to the high volume of calls during yellowjacket season our personnel are not able to locate nests. Prior to requesting a visit, you must locate the yellowjacket nest. We only treat in ground yellowjacket nests. The nest must be clearly marked and the location clearly communicated to our receptionist.

Q: Does the District offer any types of informational presentations for community groups.

A: Yes, we offer a number of educational presentations to homeowners associations, service clubs, local agencies, real estate agencies, senior centers and other various organizations located in Marin and Sonoma counties. All of our presentations are free and available year round. If you would like to schedule a presentation please contact our office 1-800-231-3236

Q: Are the education presentations offered to schools?

A: Mosquito School is offered to K-8th grade students, after school programs and summer day campers. The 45 minute presentation discusses the biology and ecology of mosquitoes as well as tips on mosquito prevention and personal protection. A mosquito rearing kit and activities are left with the classroom for a week. Teachers may schedule a Mosquito School class by calling our district office 1-800-231-3236.