

Community/HOA Letter Template

Dear Neighbor:

The St. Mary's County Health Department, in collaboration with the local office of the Maryland Department of Agriculture, is encouraging local communities to help eliminate mosquito breeding areas in our county. In addition to being general nuisances, mosquitoes are known to cause diseases including dengue, chikungunya and Zika virus disease.

At this time, the most effective way to prevent mosquito-borne illnesses is to reduce sources of mosquito breeding around areas where people live. The following tips will help reduce mosquito breeding areas surrounding your home and in our community:

- Eliminate standing water in and around your house. Once a week, empty and scrub, turn over, cover or throw out items that hold water. Mosquitoes can breed in containers as small as a bottle cap, even with only one half-inch of water.
- Keep mosquitoes out of your home. Use screens on doors and windows, and use air conditioning when available. Repair any tears in your window or door screens.
- If you have a septic tank, repair cracks or gaps and cover open vents or plumbing pipes.

The _____ Homeowners' Association is organizing a Neighborhood Mosquito Source Reduction Campaign. As part of this campaign, we will be getting information to our home owners on how to reduce mosquito breeding areas in their yards. We may also offer tips in person where trained neighborhood volunteers go door-to-door and, with permission of the homeowner, will walk around a home owner's outside property and offer the home owner tips on how to address mosquito breeding sites. These surveys are entirely voluntary and the home owner should accompany the neighborhood volunteer around the property. The neighborhood volunteer will only be offering to survey the outside property – there should not be any requests to go inside the home.

Please contact _____ at _____ if you would like to volunteer for our Neighborhood Mosquito Source Reduction Campaign. For more information about this strategy, you can visit www.smchd.org/mosquito-control

To report a mosquito nuisance or to request assistance from our local Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) office, please call 301-373-4263.

For information about Zika virus disease, visit the CDC website at www.cdc.gov/zika or the St. Mary's County Health Department website at www.smchd.org/zika. To learn more about mosquito-proofing your surroundings, visit the Maryland Department of Agriculture website at www.mda.maryland.gov.