

The Virgin Islands Consortium

DPNR Issues Zika Prevention Tips, Says It Does Not Support Fogging

Health / **Published On February 05, 2016 11:20 PM /**

Staff **February 05, 2016**



ST. CROIX -- Department of Planning and Natural Resources Commissioner Dawn Henry, is urging residents to employ sound pest management practices that will prevent the breeding of mosquitoes in and around their homes, a press release the government agency issued late Friday has revealed. The move comes as residents are seeking more information on how to protect themselves from the Zika virus, a disease possibly linked to microcephaly, a condition that causes babies to be born with brain damage and unusually small heads.

The department says residents should take the following steps:

- Ensure all windows are properly screened
- Keep all unscreened exterior doors closed
- Remove or cover anything that can collect water outside (i.e. barrels, buckets, pots)
- Eliminate all standing water around home
- Cut/trim all vegetation around home on regular basis
- Remove or properly store all unused tires

Ms. Henry is also advising residents to avoid wet, damp areas where mosquitoes can often be found and to wear light-colored long sleeves and pants, and use EPA-registered insect repellents when outdoors.

Most repellents, including DEET, can be used on children older than two months. Pregnant and lactating women can use all EPA-registered insect repellents, including DEET, according to DPNR, citing a product label. The government agency says residents should not apply insect repellent to a child's hands, mouth, cut or irritated skin. Adults should spray insect repellent onto their own hands and then apply to a child's face.

And DPNR says it does not support fogging communities due to its ineffectiveness. If pesticides are used, the release added, make certain they are EPA approved and if you need assistance, call at (340) 774-3320 on St. Thomas or (340) 773-1082 on St. Croix.