Frequently Asked Questions on Aerial Spraying of Naled

Q: Why is aerial spraying being done in my community?
A: Aerial spraying is a widely used practice to control the mosquito population and protect residents from serious mosquito-borne diseases. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), aerial spraying can rapidly reduce the number of mosquitoes spreading Zika and is the most effective method when large areas must be treated quickly. Aerial pest control activity is part of an integrated pest control solution that also includes: 1) Eliminating mosquito habitat by eliminating standing water and treating standing water that breed mosquitoes with mosquito dunks 2) Pesticide control of adult mosquitoes applied by backpacks and trucks 3) Preventing mosquito bites by using repellants and clothing 4) Keeping screens and other barriers to mosquitoes in good shape.

Q: Who decides when and where to conduct aerial spraying?
A: Decisions on when and where to conduct aerial spraying are made by local mosquito control districts and local government, in consultation with state and federal agencies, like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, when appropriate.

Q: What chemicals are used in aerial spraying?
A: Because mosquitoes can become resistant to some of the chemical agents used to control them, it is important to use different types of chemicals for effective mosquito control. Pyrethroid pesticides are typically used for backpack and truck spraying. The most frequently used pesticide for aerial spraying is naled. According to CDC, naled has been used extensively since the 1950s and is currently applied by aerial and ground spraying to an average of approximately 16 million acres of the continental United States annually.

Q: Will naled make me sick?
A: No, per the Environmental Protection Agency and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, naled used according to label instructions for mosquito control does not pose any risk to people. Naled has been safely used in the United States since the 1950s in populated areas on many millions of acres in Florida and elsewhere to control adult mosquitoes and other insects on food and feed crops and greenhouses. Only very small amounts of the pesticide reach the ground and the chemical dissipates very quickly from the environment.

Q: I heard naled is banned in Europe. Is that true?
A: No that is not true. Since aerial application of adulticides for mosquito control in Europe is used very rarely, AMVAC, the company that sells naled, simply chose not to support the product under the EU Reregistration program. Since the product has not gone through the registration process to be approved for use, it cannot be used in Europe.

Q: I'm still concerned about negative effects on my health. What should I do?
A: These pesticides are safe for people. Mosquito control notifies the public when aerial spraying will occur. Aerial spraying is typically conducted in the pre-dawn hours to limit exposure to people. If aerial spraying is scheduled in your area, you can plan to stay indoors during the time of the spraying to limit your exposure, but according to CDC it is not necessary.

Q: Naled was sprayed in my community and I think it made me sick. What should I do?
A: If you are sick, please contact your doctor. If you would like to report an illness that might be associated with pesticide application, you can call the Florida Poison Information Centers at 1.800.222.1222 which is staffed by doctors, nurses, toxicologists and other health care professionals 24/7.

Q: Has aerial spraying been used in Florida before?
A: Yes. Naled is used by mosquito control districts every year in Florida. According to CDC, it has also been used to control mosquitoes after hurricanes and other natural disasters. For example, in 2004 Florida was hit pretty hard by a series of hurricanes. We had a significant amount of standing water and breeding sites for mosquitoes – thus a larger population of mosquitoes. We used aerial spraying as part of our vector control strategy then. The Florida Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention conducted a study in 2004 to assess human exposure to naled. 205 participants completed the study and the majority of participant samples were below the limit of detection following the spraying activity. The study suggests that aerial spraying of naled does not result in increased levels of naled in humans, provided that naled is used according to label instructions.