



**COMAL COUNTY, TEXAS  
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE**

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**County implements mosquito-abatement policy for vacant property**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, MAY 4, 2016:**

*NEW BRAUNFELS* — Comal County environmental enforcement staff will be able to abate mosquitoes on unoccupied property, under a new policy implemented this week as authorized by existing state law.

The policy allows the county to take steps to control a mosquito population breeding on land that is unoccupied or abandoned after providing written notice. Crews would do so on a complaint basis, said County Engineer Tom Hornseth.

“We typically cannot and do not go onto private property,” Hornseth said. “However, state law gives us some limited authority to address nuisances that pose a threat to public health, and that includes standing water where mosquitoes are breeding.”

If the county receives a complaint about mosquitoes breeding on unoccupied property, Comal County Environmental Health will send a written notice to the property owner on record, Hornseth said. If the county receives no response after a specified number of days, crews will abate the problem, likely by treating the water with larvicide.

For occupied property, the county works with the resident to resolve the complaint, Hornseth said. Residents with concerns about areas they believe are breeding mosquitoes can call Comal County Environmental Health at 830-608-2090.

Mosquitoes carry a range of diseases, including Zika virus. To date, no confirmed cases of Zika virus have been reported in Comal County. With summer approaching, Comal County and the City of New Braunfels have ramped up efforts to reduce the risk posed by mosquitoes.

Steps taken by the county and the city include:

- County road crews and the City of New Braunfels Public Works Department treat with larvicide standing water in public rights of way;
- The City of New Braunfels Code Enforcement staff responds to complaints about standing water on vacant or unimproved property;
- The Comal County office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service has conducted trainings for master naturalists and master gardeners about how to prevent mosquito breeding and keep oneself safe from mosquito bites;
- The county's Moe Schwab Recycling Center accepts tires, which are prime mosquito breeding grounds, and New Braunfels also accepts tires at its quarterly bulk household goods drop-off locations.

Residents should continue to take steps to protect their property – and themselves – from mosquitoes. Tips for controlling mosquitoes and more information about Zika virus can be found at [texaszika.org](http://texaszika.org)

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