

COVID-19 Affects TMCA

Joint Annual Meeting Cancelled for 2020;

No Annual TMCA Meeting in 2020;

Annual Member Business Meeting in December via Teleconference

Annual Regulatory Requirements Change for 2020

As the world continues to adjust and work through this unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, all Texans are being affected in their professional and personal lives. Social distancing is the new norm in efforts to lower the incidence of disease transmission and promote community safety but with these new guidelines, there comes change.

In order to promote safety and accommodate the rules set before us, the Texas Mosquito Control Association is also being affected and changes are being made to our standard practices. These changes include:

1. The Joint Annual Meeting between the Louisiana and Texas Mosquito Control Associations has been postponed until December 2022.
2. The TMCA Board of Directors met via teleconference and decided not to have a physical TMCA Annual Meeting in 2020 and therefore, no fall meeting will be scheduled.
3. The TMCA Board of Directors will continue to have their Board meetings via teleconference.
4. The TMCA informational platforms (Facebook, website, and newsletters) will still be functional and a place to look for information.
5. The 2020 TMCA Annual Business Meeting will be conducted via teleconference (all members invited) in December. The Business meeting will be held to conduct this year's election(s) and transition of officers and board members. When available the date and information pertaining to this meeting will be posted via TMCA information platforms.

While the TMCA has been affected, COVID-19 has not stopped or slowed mosquito development, and mosquito-borne diseases are still present in Texas and expected to follow their seasonal pattern. This is not a normal year and while we must be prepared for "routine" mosquito surveillance and control, like we have been doing year after year, we also must be looking for changes in human behavior that may lead to increased mosquito exposure.

For example, there has been a major shift in the normal activities of our citizens, which was to get up, go to work, eat at restaurants, go to entertainment venues, go home, stay inside, go to bed, and repeat the next day. Now, many are home most of the day and cannot do the things they once enjoyed doing. At this point, we do not know how their change in normal routine might impact mosquito-borne disease transmission.

If people are staying at home, will their exposure to mosquitoes and hence mosquito-borne disease be higher or lower than normal? Are more people playing or working outside in the evenings than they would have been if they had worked all day, came home, ate supper, and relaxed in front of the computer, smart phone, or TV? If yes, then their exposure to blood-seeking infectious mosquitoes may be greater. We must think about these changes and enact those things that might mitigate the concern before it is expressed as an increase in disease transmission. Therefore, we need to pay special attention to our mosquito surveillance and control this season, look for changes in the normal routine of people that may increase exposure and disease potential, and take action to modify our practices and mitigate potential exposures.

As COVID-19 circumstances change, so do the changes associated with the annual requirements for CEUs and the calibration of equipment. Dr. Sonja Swiger, Medical and Veterinary Entomologist, Texas AgriLife Extension, is the primary source of information regarding these changes, and for the latest information on annual legal requirements for mosquito control in Texas, visit the Texas AgriLife website at <https://agrilife.org/aes/> or Dr. Sonja Swiger's blog page at <https://rockerflydoc.blogspot.com/>.

In closing, this is not a routine mosquito season. It is affected by a world-wide pandemic and massive changes in the routine behavior of the human population that we serve. Look for changes in human behavior that may increase exposure to infectious mosquitoes and take action to mitigate those exposures before disease transmission can occur. Follow guidance from your local health authorities on COVID-19 mitigation, implement exceptional mosquito surveillance and control activities, and stay safe while protecting those around you.