

Drain Flies

About Drain Flies

Drain flies (sometimes called moth flies, sewage flies, or filter flies) are small flies with fuzzy wings. They may be identified by their characteristic behavior of short, hopping flights.

Drain flies lay their eggs in wet organic matter, most commonly the residue left on the inside of drain pipes. They may also be found breeding in other areas, such as:

- sewage treatment plants
- sewer leaks or backups
- clogged roof gutters
- air conditioners
- plant saucers
- bird baths
- rain barrels
- clogged storm drains
- dirty garbage cans

Mature drain flies emerge from drains in sinks, tubs, showers, and floors. During the day the adults can be seen flying in short hops or resting on the wall, tub, or sink. At night, they become more active and hover around drains. The adults feed on nectar and polluted water.



Finding the Source of an Infestation

Indoors, adult drain flies are often found near their breeding site. Drain flies hatching from outdoor sources may be dispersed by wind, but in this case will be found in larger numbers outdoors than indoors.

To confirm that a drain is the source of an infestation, you may scrape the inside of the drainpipe and examine the collected slime for drain fly larvae.

You may also place a clear plastic bag or glass jar over the drain to trap any emerging flies. Coating the inside of the jar or bag with petroleum jelly will immobilize the flies and make them easier to identify.





Control Options

If you are experiencing a drain fly infestation, first conduct a thorough survey to locate the source of the infestation. Remember that it is possible drain flies are coming from an outdoor source.

Once you have located the source of the infestation, thoroughly clean the drain with a brush or drain cleaner to remove the larvae and the organic residue they develop in. If flies are coming from outdoors, make sure your windows are closed or tightly screened to keep them out.

Pouring insecticides or bleach down drains is NOT effective in eliminating drain flies, and may harm the environment. If you choose to use insecticides to eliminate adult drain flies, remember to ALWAYS read and follow the label instructions.



SAN MATEO COUNTY
MOSQUITO & VECTOR
CONTROL DISTRICT

Preventing Drain Fly Infestation

The best way to prevent drain fly infestations is to periodically clean all drains. You can use a brush or a drain cleaner product designed to remove organic buildup on the inside of drain pipes. You should not pour insecticide or bleach down drains.

Keeping doors and windows closed or tightly screened will prevent drain flies from outdoors coming in.

How We Can Help

The District does not provide chemical control for drain flies or any other insect. Our laboratory may be able to identify drain fly samples or suspected drain fly samples brought to the District office in a sealed bag or vial. Our technicians can provide information and recommendations for controlling drain fly infestations.

San Mateo County Mosquito and Vector Control District

(650) 344 - 8592
1351 Rollins Road
Burlingame, CA 94010

Monday-Friday
8a.m. to 4:30p.m.

www.smcmvcd.org