

Legionella Policy

Legionnaires' disease is a potentially fatal pneumonia caused by legionella bacteria. A common misconception is that Legionnaires disease is contracted from drinking contaminated water, this is incorrect. Legionnaires is an airborne disease and infection is caused by inhalation of contaminated water droplets that can enter your lungs where the bacteria can manifest.

Due to its airborne capabilities the bacteria can inoculate people remote from premises, and there have even been reports of people being infected 5 miles from the source.

Everyone is potentially susceptible to infection, but some people are at higher risk, for example males are more than 3 times higher risk than females, those over 50 years of age, smokers and heavy drinkers, those suffering from chronic respiratory or kidney disease, and people whose immune system is impaired.

A wide range of organisations, groups or self-employed individuals providing residential accommodation are responsible for the water system(s) in their premises, including:

- Local authorities
- Universities
- Housing associations, including housing companies
- Charities
- Hostels
- Landlords in the private renting sector
- Managing agents
- Hoteliers, B&B, guest house and holiday camp owners; and
- Caravan and camping site owners, including fixed caravan sites
- Glamping Pods
- Hot Tubs
- Swimming Pools
- Holiday Houses

What are my Legal duties?

It is a legal requirement under the Health and Safety at Work act 1974 that you identify and assess the risk from exposure to legionella to your own staff, guests and customers, and any other people working in your premises, and introduce appropriate measures to control any risk.

The first step is to have a Legionella Risk Assessment carried out on your property; this will identify any potential sources of Legionella. Once the potential sources of Legionella have been identified a suitable control scheme can be devised then implemented.

What should my property already have in place to minimise Legionella?

- An up to date Legionella risk assessment.
- Staff should have received Legionella awareness training.
- Legionella logbook with all checks recorded.
- Certificates of any water tanks that have been cleaned and chlorinated.
- A suitable temperature gauge, i.e. Thermapen
- Suitable shower head cleaner i.e. Shower Head Plus

How can I minimise the risk of Legionella in my property?

The control scheme doesn't need to be complicated, remember you are trying to prevent Legionella from multiplying and getting out of control within your property. Control measures can include the following: -

- Cleaning shower heads every 3 months with a suitable de-scaler i.e. shower head plus.
- Testing hot and cold temperatures from dedicated outlets through the property. The cold must be <20 C and the hot must be above >50c. These temperature ranges will prevent Legionella from multiplying.
- Servicing private water supply filters and UV units every 6 to 12 months.
- Cleaning and disinfecting cold water storage tanks every year.
- Preventing hot and cold water from stagnating, i.e., flushing infrequently used outlets that have not been used within 7 days every week for 5 minutes.

Remember it is equally important that all the above information is recorded as this provides an audit trail if anything ever goes wrong.

For any further advice or help with Legionella risk assessments, Legionella awareness training, water tank cleaning and disinfecting, contact supplier plus members Solway Water Management.

www.solwaywatermanagement.co.uk

For further reading on Legionella refer to the HSE website: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/legionnaires/>

Updated by Solway Water Management November 2021