



Legionella **Advice for Businesses Owners and Holiday** **Accommodation Providers during Lockdown.**

What is the risk?

Legionella bacteria is commonly found in water. The bacteria multiply where temperatures are between 20-45°C and nutrients are available. The bacteria are dormant below 20°C and do not survive above 60°C.

Legionnaires' disease is a potentially fatal type of pneumonia, contracted by inhaling airborne water droplets containing viable Legionella bacteria. Such droplets can be created, for example, by: hot and cold water outlets; wet air conditioning units; and whirlpool baths or hot tubs.

Anyone can develop Legionnaires' disease, but the elderly, smokers, alcoholics and those with cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory or kidney disease are at more risk.

Where water is left standing in water pipes and water storage tanks when the temperature is regularly above 20°C, there is a risk of Legionella growing in the water system.

All employers and holiday accommodation owners have legal obligations under the Health and Safety at Work etc., Act 1974 and associated legislation to maintain the water systems in their premises to prevent growth of Legionella bacteria and this advice will help them comply with this duty.

In vacant or partially unused properties, water can stagnate within hot and cold water systems. This can lead to Legionella bacteria growing to harmful levels that could lead to someone contracting Legionnaires' disease when water systems are brought back into use.

The risk of this happening also can increase during warmer weather and where equipment that produces water aerosols is used e.g. showers, high pressure hoses and mist systems.

How can employers and owners of holiday accommodation reduce the risk of Legionella?

Outlets on hot and cold water systems should be used at least once a week to maintain a degree of water flow and to minimise the chances of stagnation. To manage the risks during non-occupancy, consideration should be given to implementing a suitable flushing regime or other measures such as draining the system if it is to remain vacant for long periods (see <https://www.hse.gov.uk/legionnaires/legionella-landlords-responsibilities.htm>). This guidance also applies to workplaces which become less occupied.

Consideration should be given to other water systems that are no longer in use, such as leisure, sports and swimming and spa pool facilities. For these facilities, you should follow the procedures described in the Pool Water Treatment Advisory Group Code of Practice and this can be found at <https://www.pwtag.org/code-of-practice/>.

Simple guidance has also been produced by the European Society for Clinical Microbiology and Infectious disease on managing Legionella in building water systems during the COVID-19 pandemic:
https://www.escmid.org/fileadmin/src/media/PDFs/3Research_Projects/E_SGLI/COVID_buidling_water_system_guidance_27_3_20_v4_DS.pdf

Where can I get more information?

More information on legionella and your duty as an employer, visit:
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/legionella-risks-during-coronavirus-outbreak.htm>
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/legionnaires-disease-guidance-data-and-analysis>

or contact

East Lindsey Environmental Health on 01507 613486 or
email: commercial.team@e-lindsey.gov.uk

It is very important that while many buildings and offices are shut down due to the pandemic, that water systems are still well maintained to prevent future health issues like Legionella outbreaks.

The information and links provided in this leaflet will help you maintain water systems during this outbreak.