

Legionella Policy

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1. INTRODUCTION

Legionella bacteria cause a number of diseases the most serious of which is Legionnaire's disease, which is similar to pneumonia and potentially fatal. Legionnaire's disease is usually contracted by inhaling droplets of water contaminated by Legionella bacteria.

Legionella bacteria are present in most naturally occurring water sources but at very low concentrations. The chief risk from Legionella occurs when the temperature of the water or the level of nutrients present is conducive to growth and the concentration of the bacteria increases.

An occurrence of Legionnaires disease is notifiable under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) providing the exposure to Legionella bacteria occurred in the workplace or as a result of work based activity.

SCOPE

The Council recognises its responsibility towards its staff, contractors, service users and members of the public for managing risks associated with exposure to legionella bacteria. By implementing this policy the Council ensures that the risks associated with legionella bacteria in its premises are controlled and minimised.

This policy sets out the procedures to be followed in respect of the control of Legionella in Council premises and for ensuring that the Council meets its legal duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002.

AIMS

The policy:

- Sets out the responsibilities members of staff have in respect to the minimisation of the risks presented by Legionella bacteria
- Describes the methods by which the control of risks relating to Legionella are controlled
- Provides information about the system by which any additional training is provided
- Defines the health and safety risks presented by Legionella bacteria.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsible person appointed to manage the control of Legionella in Council properties is the Strategic Manager, Economic Development and Assets

The deputy to the responsible person who is responsible for the day to day management of Legionella issues is the Principle Officer Corporate Property

All staff must:

- Report any issues with their work place water systems that they become aware of to their manager (eg leaks, discoloured water, etc)
- Ensure they follow their responsibilities in respect of contractors (see Section 2.04 of the Health & Safety Manual 'Health and Safety of contractors')
- In the event they are diagnosed with Legionnaire's disease, notify their manager and the Health, Safety and Welfare Section (HSWS) immediately.

Managers must:

- Report any problems with their premises water system to their Premises Liaison Officer
- Co-operate with contractors and Facilities Management when remedial works and monitoring visits are carried out
- Ensure all contractors operate in accordance with Section 2.04 (Health and Safety of contractors) of the Health and Safety Manual
- Report any cases of Legionnaires disease via the Workrite accident reporting system
- Notify the Health and Safety Executive, via their online reporting form, under RIDDOR of any cases of Legionnaires disease caused by exposure to Legionella bacteria as a result of work activities
- Ensure that where a high legionella count, legionella outbreak or possible legionella outbreak occurs this is notified to their manager without delay.

Premises Liaison Officers must:

- Ensure that all the water outlets in their premises are flushed at least once a month
- Ensure that all shower heads in their premises are de-scaled at least quarterly
- Liaise with the Facilities Management Team regarding any issues and risks identified

Health and Safety Liaison Officers should:

- Support their manager in ensuring that the manager's responsibilities under this policy and those under Section 2.04 (Health and Safety of Contractors) are met

Facilities Management will:

- Ensure that risk assessments are carried out and reviewed across all Council premises
- Implement all remedial actions and control measures identified
- Manage the ongoing monitoring of the effectiveness of remedial actions and control measures
- Keep records of all risk assessments, corrective actions and monitoring carried out
- Monitor work carried out by Contractors
- Where monitoring tests indicate a high legionella count, notify the relevant Premises Liaison Officer and Manager

Facilities Management have engaged contractors who must:

- Perform risk assessments for all Council premises
- Implement a program of monitoring visits on Council premises at regular intervals

- Report the results of all tests and monitoring carried out to Facilities Management, highlighting any results that fall outside of the required limits
- Carry out remedial actions and other tasks as requested by Facilities Management

3. MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL OF RISK

In order to comply with its duties to manage and control risk from Legionella bacteria in its water systems the Council has:

- Appointed a responsible person and deputies to oversee and manage all aspects of the Councils water systems and any risk from Legionella bacteria that may be posed
- Engaged a competent contractor to carry out a program of risk assessment and reviews of all Council premises
- Ensured that all water systems meet the standards of best practise for control of Legionella bacteria and reducing the risk of exposure as far as reasonably practicable
- Implemented any control measures identified by risk assessments and ensured that they are suitable and sufficient
- Ensured that any control measures implemented do not have implications for the health and safety of users, particularly where such users are in a vulnerable group, such as residents of care homes. Where appropriate additional control measures are put in place to mitigate this risk
- Instated a regime of monitoring, reviews and audits of the Councils water systems by the appointment of a competent contractor
- Set up and maintained a record keeping system of activity associated with managing the risks related with Legionella. This includes risk assessments, monitoring and inspection visit records and findings, and records of all remedial and maintenance work carried out
- Ensured that in the event of any changes to the water systems, properties or facilities at any Council premises, whether permanent or temporary, risk assessments are carried out to determine if the changes have implications for the control of risk for Legionella bacteria are carried out
- Ensures that all plumbing alterations are carried out by trained plumbers in order to ensure compliance with water regulations and byelaws.

4. INFORMATION AND TRAINING

Employees who are required to carry out monitoring or inspections in relation to Legionella will be given the necessary information, instruction, training and supervision to enable them to effectively carry out this task. Training needs should be assessed by their manager as part of an individual's personal development plan.

APPENDIX 1

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LEGIONNAIRE'S DISEASE

Legionellosis is the term used for medical conditions caused by the bacterium *Legionella pneumophila*, the most serious of which is a form of pneumonia known as Legionnaire's disease. The organisms can also be responsible for many milder illnesses including Pontiac Fever.

Legionella bacteria are found in all water courses, whether natural or man-made, they are also found in the soil, in many re-circulating hot and cold water systems and in stored water.

Common risk areas include:

- Water systems incorporating a cooling tower or evaporative condenser
- Hot and cold water systems
- Plant and systems containing water likely to exceed 20°C which may release a spray or aerosol during operation or when being maintained
- Pressure hoses
- Showers
- Water fountains
- Disused toilets and sinks

Legionnaire's Disease is contracted by breathing in small droplets of contaminated water suspended in the air or by breathing in Legionella contaminated particles left after the water has evaporated. In order to contract the disease these contaminated particles or water droplets need to be inhaled deeply into the lungs. No evidence exists to suggest the disease can be spread by person to person contact.

Symptoms of the disease usually appear 2 – 10 days after exposure to the bacteria. It can usually be treated with antibiotics but the disease is fatal in roughly 12% of cases. People most vulnerable to the disease are men over 45, smokers, alcoholics, the very young, diabetics, those with cancer and people with chronic respiratory or kidney disease.

Legionella bacteria growth is most prevalent, in water systems between 20°C and 40°C. In order to prevent Legionella from multiplying, water systems should operate at the following recommended temperatures:

- Cold water systems 20°C or below
- Hot water storage 60°C
- Hot water distribution at least 50°C

As 50°C is hot enough to cause injury from scalding, precautions need to be taken where vulnerable people, such as the elderly or children may come into contact with it.

Other precautions will include:

- De-scaling shower heads at least once per quarter
- Ensuring all water outlets are flushed at least once a month. Water outlets that are used frequently will not require specific flushing. Taps should be run for approximately 3 minutes.
- Chemical decontamination of a water system when required
- Removal of any build-up of rust, scale and sediment in a water system

APPENDIX 2

APPENDIX 2

ACTION IN THE CASE OF AN OUTBREAK

Legionnaire's disease is notifiable under RIDDOR where it has been diagnosed by a doctor and the person's current job involves either working on or near cooling systems which involve water or they are engaged on work on water systems which are likely to be a source of contamination.

Legionnaire's disease is also notifiable under the Health Protection Regulations 2010 however this is to be done by a medical professional or a laboratory upon confirmation of an actual infection by the disease.