



What is Legionnaires' Disease?

Legionnaires' Disease is a pneumonia like illness caused by the Legionella bacteria and can be fatal. The infection is caused by breathing in small droplets of water contaminated by the bacteria. The disease cannot be passed from one person to another. Legionella bacteria are found in the natural environment and may contaminate and grow in water systems, including domestic hot and cold water systems. They survive low temperatures and thrive at temperatures between 20 – 45°C if the conditions are right. They are killed by high temperatures at 60°C or above.

How do I carry out a Legionella risk assessment?

The purpose of carrying out a risk assessment is to identify and assess any risks in the water system. The competent / responsible person should understand water systems and any associated equipment, in order to conclude whether the system is likely to create a risk from exposure to Legionella, and should be able to identify whether:

1. Water is stored or re-circulated as part of your system.
2. The water temperature in some or all parts of the system is between 20-45 °C.
3. There are sources of nutrients such as rust, sludge, scale and organic matters.
4. Conditions are present to encourage bacteria to multiply.
5. It is possible for water droplets to be produced and, if so, whether they could be dispersed over a wide area, e.g. showers and aerosols from cooling towers.
6. It is likely that any of your employees, residents, visitors etc. are more susceptible to infection due to age, illness, a weakened immune system etc. and whether they could be exposed to any contaminated water droplets.

Tenant Guidelines

1. Landlords should inform tenants of the potential risk of exposure to Legionnaire's disease within domestic properties and its consequences.
 2. They should advise on any actions arising from the finding of the risk assessment, where appropriate.
 3. Tenants should be advised in particular that they should:
 4. Inform the landlord/letting agent if they believe the hot water temperature is below 50°C or the hot water tank/boiler is defective in any way.
 5. Not adjust the temperature of the hot water.
 6. Advise landlord/letting agent if they believe the cold water temperature is above 20°C.
 7. Flush through little used outlets for 2 minutes at least once a week.
 8. Clean, disinfect and descale shower heads at least once every 6 months.
 9. Notify the landlord/letting agent if they notice any debris or discoloration in the hot or cold Water.
 10. If you conclude, that there is no reasonably foreseeable risk or the risks are low and are being properly
 11. managed to comply with the law, your assessment is complete.
 12. You may not need to take any further action at this stage, but any existing controls must be maintained and the assessment reviewed
 13. regularly in case anything changes in your system.
 14. We have linked up with 2 companies who provide training in how to complete the assessment.
 15. Arrangements to review the risk assessment regularly.