

This leaflet provides information on the risks of contracting Legionnaires' disease, and how to significantly reduce this risk.

Background

As your Landlord we have an obligation to ensure you are aware of the possible causes and symptoms of Legionnaires' disease so you can identify any problems easily and report any concerns to us.

What is Legionnaires' Disease?

Legionnaires' disease is a potentially fatal form of pneumonia, which can affect anybody. It is caused by the inhalation of small droplets of water from contaminated sources containing legionella bacteria.

Where is Legionella found?

All hot and cold water systems in residential properties are a potential source for legionella bacteria growth. The main areas of risk are where the bacteria can multiply and increase to dangerous levels and then spread, e.g. in spray from showers and taps. Conditions perfect for bacterial growth are where water of between 20°C and 45°C stagnates, and where there is sludge, rust and scale present for the bacteria to feed upon and multiply.

Who is at risk?

Everyone is potentially susceptible to infection but Legionnaires' disease most commonly affects people over the age of 45, smokers and heavy drinkers, those suffering from chronic respiratory or kidney disease, people whose immune system is impaired, and those suffering from long term illness.

Not everyone exposed to legionella bacteria becomes ill. Legionnaires' disease is not contagious.

On average, there are approximately 500 reported cases of Legionnaires' disease a year. The symptoms of Legionnaires' disease are similar to those of flu:

- high temperatures
- fevers or chills
- headaches
- tiredness
- muscle pains
- dry coughs

There is no need for concern. Legionnaires' disease is easily preventable by putting in place some simple control measures.

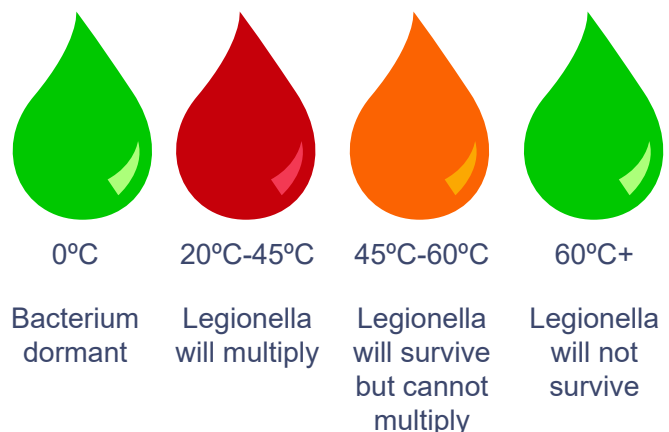
The information in this leaflet will help you prevent any potential problems. Report any deposits such as rust or any unusual matter flowing from your water outlets.

What precautions can I take?

Taking the following simple precautions will help keep you safe:

- Flush through showers and taps for 10 minutes following a period of non-use (i.e. after you have been on holiday or if a room is not in regular use). When flushing the shower, try not to create any spray, either by removing the shower head or by catching the water in a plastic bag and disposing of it carefully
- Keep all shower heads and taps clean and free from a build-up of lime scale, mould or algae growth
- Flush toilet/s with the lid down following a period of non-use
- Drain hosepipes after use and keep out of direct sunlight. Flush through for a couple of minutes before filling paddling pools etc.
- Keep stored hot water in your system at a temperature of 60°C or greater (Immersion heaters etc.)

Raising the temperature of warm water is one way to control legionella growth, but could also increase the risk of burns and scalding. Please take care especially if you have children.



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What does the Association do?

- Legionella risk assessments are carried out where communal water tanks are in place (Radnor Park and band 1 tenements). This forms the basis of our cyclical water management works.
- Carry out a cyclical water management programme. This includes tank inspections/cleaning, temperature tests, testing of water samples and checks of thermostatic mixer valves.
- Record information on our water management register.

What do I do if I think I may have contracted Legionnaires' disease?

If you suspect that you or someone in your home has contracted Legionnaires' disease, contact your doctor immediately.

You should also contact us so that we can take the appropriate measures.

You cannot get Legionnaires' disease from drinking water.

People catch Legionnaire's disease by inhaling small droplets of water suspended in the air, which contain the bacteria.

The bacteria have to be in very small droplets like spray from a shower or spray taps.

In domestic properties the risk of Legionnaire's disease is rated as low risk. This can be kept low by following the guidelines in this leaflet.

For further information don't hesitate to call the Maintenance Team at the office or visit the Health & Safety Executive's (HSE) website www.hse.gov.uk/legionnaires. The HSE is the government body responsible for water hygiene and Legionnaires' disease.

If you or someone you know would like this leaflet in any other format, let us know.

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