



LEGIONELLA POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Version 1.4

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1. AIM

It is a legal requirement for the company to ensure the risk from Legionella within the clinic is monitored and risk assessed, to ensure the risk is low to both staff, patients, external contractors and other visitors to our service premises. The responsibility for this lies with the nominated Duty holder for the company responsible for Health & Safety.

The responsibility for nominating a suitable qualified and knowledgeable Duty holder lies with the senior management team

Legionnaires disease affects an average of 200-300 people per year in the UK.

2. INTRODUCTION

What is Legionnaires' disease?

- Legionnaires' disease is a potentially fatal pathogenic bacterium. It is the most well-known and serious form of a group of diseases known as legionellosis. Other similar (but usually less serious) conditions include Pontiac fever and Lochgoilhead fever.
- Infection is caused by breathing in small droplets of water (aerosols) contaminated by the bacteria. The disease cannot be passed from one person to another.

Everyone is potentially susceptible to infection, but some people are at **higher risk**, they are:

- Anyone over 45 years' old
- Smokers and heavy drinkers
- Anyone with lung disease
- Heart disease
- Kidney disease
- Who are diabetic
- Have an impaired immune system

Early symptoms of Legionella are:

- Early symptoms are headache and muscle pain

More severe symptoms are:

- High temperature
- Chills
- Severe muscle pain
- Confusion

- Legionella bacteria are common in natural water courses such as rivers and ponds, but only normally in small quantities and therefore not harmful.

What types of conditions/equipment cause a high risk of Legionella infection?

- The Legionella Bacteria become harmful in higher quantities where conditions are ripe for their growth. Man-made water distribution systems carry the highest potential risk of Legionella; they are:
 - Water cooling systems
 - Evaporative condensers
 - Spa pools, Jacuzzis
 - Where water is stored at a constant temperature above 20 Celsius and below 50 Celsius and open to the air
 - Un maintained showers fed by water not from the mains supply
 - Stagnant water
 - Presence of organic material within any water chamber which aids bacterial growth

What conditions/equipment carries a low risk?

- Regularly used mains water supply for cold water
- Toilets & wash basins fed by mains water
- Well maintained demand water heaters
- Any cold water that is kept at a constant temperature below 20 degrees Celsius
- Any hot water supply that is kept above 50 degrees Celsius

3. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITY

All senior management who have been nominated a 'Duty holder' for Health & Safety for the company. Any nominated staff must have proven knowledge and competencies to carry out the role of Duty holder. All staff employed by the clinic have a responsibility to ensure managers are informed of any concerns they have regarding safety or their health

4. EQUIPMENT

Digital water thermometer, regular maintenance of all water coolers and heaters

5. HAZARDS and SAFETY

Any threat to the health of staff and patients, external contractors, and visitors.

6. PROCEDURE / SYSTEMS IN PLACE

- Monthly water temperature checks that are documented (records must be kept for 5 years)
- Risk assessment done every 12 months
- Regular maintenance of hot water systems (compliant with manufacturers guidance) records to be kept for 5 years
- Risk assessments to be repeated after installation of any new water cooling or hot water systems, or refurbishment of premises
- Independent checks by registered experts once every 2 years of water quality

Risk assessment criteria:

- Identify the hazard
- Decide who might be harmed and how
- Evaluate risk and implement controls
- Include all employees
- Record findings
- Review and update

All risk assessments must also include:

- Feedback from staff
- Manufacturer's data
- Review of employee's individual risk from Legionella, to include review of sickness records

Statement of current man-made water systems in the clinic:

- Current Hot water system is on a timer and water is stored at a constant temperature +50 degrees Celsius. (hot water warning signs are placed above all wash basins and sinks in the clinic)
- Cold water is mains fed and low risk
- Hot and cold temperatures are checked every week
- We have removed the shower head as shower never used

7. QUALITY CONTROL and AUDIT

This policy is subject to review every year if there is reasonable need to amend the policy due to changes in water supply and any incidents of Legionella directly related to the company's premises.

8. LEGAL GOVERNANCE FOR THIS POLICY

Acts of Parliament and Legal Regulations that govern this policy:

- HEALTH & SAFETY AT WORK ACT 1974
- MANAGEMENT OF HEALTH & SAFETY AT WORK REGULATIONS 1977
- THE HEALTH & SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES & SAFETY COMMITTEES REGULATIONS 1977
- THE HEALTH & SAFETY (CONSULTATION WITH EMPLOYEES) REGULATIONS 1996
- COSHH 2002 REGULATIONS
- RIDDOR REGULATIONS 2013

9. REFERENCES

To comply with Legionnaires' disease: The control of legionella bacteria in water systems. Approved Code of Practice L8 (Fourth edition) 2013.

Legionnaires' disease: Technical guidance, Part 1: The control of legionella bacteria in evaporative cooling systems, HSG274 Part 1, Published 2013:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg274part1.pdf>

Legionnaires' disease, Part 2: The control of legionella bacteria in hot and cold water systems, HSG274 Part 2, 2014: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg274part2.pdf>

Legionnaires' disease: Technical guidance, Part 3: The control of legionella bacteria in other risk systems, HSG274 Part 3, 2013: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg274part3.pdf>

Protect staff and Patients from the risks from legionella.

10. APPENDICES / RELATED DOCUMENTS

The following advice from the Health and Safety Executive should be included in any planning

One way of controlling legionella is to keep water hot, which you may be doing for other reasons already. However, care is needed where water runs hot. The risks of scalding should be assessed and appropriate measures taken to prevent burns, eg warning notices and thermostatic mixing valves on taps.

Can I reduce my water temperatures if I am using another method of controlling legionella?

It depends. If you don't need the hot water for other reasons, then using another effective treatment method means that you can reduce water temperatures. There is specific advice on this issue in hospitals and you should refer to this. It recommends keeping the water hot and not reducing the temperature (see Further Information section).

But whatever treatment method you use, you need to make sure you know:

- *What the effective level of control is for your system, eg temperature and concentration of biocides;*
- *If the treatment method can cope with changes in the system, eg variations in the amount of water used throughout the day; and*
- *How you are going to measure the effectiveness of the treatment method. For*

example, if you are using temperature as a control method you can take the temperature of the water coming out of the taps.

Should I take samples to test for legionella?

It depends. Sampling and testing for the presence of legionella bacteria is just one way of checking that your system is under control. But it is not a simple test, as sampling and detecting legionella requires specialist help. Further details on how to sample and the frequency of sampling in both cooling towers and hot and cold water systems can be found in Part 2 of the ACOP and guidance (see Further Information section).

Managing the risk

You need to appoint someone to take responsibility for managing the control scheme that you have put in place.

The 'responsible person' needs to be competent – that is, they need to have sufficient knowledge and experience of your system to enable them to manage and control the scheme effectively.

If there are several people responsible for managing the system and/or control scheme, for example because of shift-work patterns, you need to make sure that everyone knows what they are responsible for and how they fit into the overall management of the system.

If you decide to employ contractors to carry out water treatment or other work, it is still the responsibility of the appointed person to ensure that the treatment is carried out to the required standards. And remember, before you employ a contractor, you should be satisfied that they can do the work you want to the standard that you require. A Code of Conduct for service providers has been prepared to help you with this (see Further Information section for details).

What records do I need to keep?

If you employ five or more people you must record the significant findings of your risk assessment. This means writing down the significant findings of the assessment and details of any monitoring or checking carried out.

If you have fewer than five employees you do not need to write anything down, although it is useful to keep a written record of what you have done.

You also need to keep records of your written scheme and who is responsible for managing that scheme. You should also keep the results of your routine monitoring. You need to keep these records for a minimum of five years.

Does anybody else have to do anything about legionella?

Yes. Anyone who is involved in the supply of water systems and their components (eg designers, manufacturers, water treatment companies and suppliers) has to make sure that such equipment is designed and made in such a way that it is safe to use at work and that it can be easily cleaned and maintained. They should tell you what risks might be present and how you can operate and maintain the system safely.

If you are using products or services, for example, for water treatment, the suppliers must make sure that these are effective at controlling legionella and that they can be used safely at work.

They should also tell you if, while they are treating your system, they find any problems which could pose a significant risk of legionella exposure.

Do I have any other duties?

Yes. If you have a cooling tower or evaporative condenser on site you must, under the Notification of Cooling Towers and Evaporative Condensers Regulations, notify the local authority in writing with details of where it is located. You must also tell them when/if such devices are no longer in use. Notification forms are available from your local environmental health department.

If you have a case of legionellosis in an employee who has worked on cooling towers or hot water

systems that are likely to be contaminated with legionella, you have to report this under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations.

What happens when there is an outbreak?

Local authorities have special plans for dealing with major outbreaks of infectious disease including legionellosis. These are usually investigated by an Outbreak Control Team whose purpose is to protect public health and prevent further infection.