

Legionella Start up Checklist

This information is intended for small businesses returning to work after a period of closure where risks from Legionella from hot and cold water systems may be increased.

This guide is not intended for large businesses or those where a specific Legionella risk assessment and control systems need to be in place i.e. cooling towers/ spa's and swimming pools.

When looking to open buildings that have been closed for long periods of time certain systems including **water cannot just be turned back on and put back into normal service**. The steps below will help you develop a re-start plan for water systems.

You should complete this checklist before you use your water.

What is Legionella?

Legionella is a bacteria that can cause pneumonia-like illness which can potentially be fatal. One of these illnesses is called Legionnaires' disease. Everyone is vulnerable to the infection. However, some people are at higher risk, including:

- people over 45 years of age;
- smokers and heavy drinkers;
- people suffering from chronic respiratory or kidney disease; and
- anyone with an impaired immune system.

Symptoms of Legionnaires' disease can be very similar to COVID-19 and include high temperature, feverishness and chills; cough; muscle pains; headache; and pneumonia:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/legionnaires/symptoms.htm>

Legionnaires' disease can be contracted by inhaling small droplets of water (aerosols) suspended in the air containing Legionella bacteria. Legionella bacteria are naturally present in water systems.

Unless water systems have been maintained up to and during the closure of buildings the risk of Legionella growth to a level which may cause illness when buildings are reopened is increased. Of particular note, the warmer summer months will lead to a greater amount of Legionella bacteria in water systems that are not being used or maintained. Suitable measures should be in place to prevent such occurrences from happening.

Main Points hot/cold water systems

Refer to CIEH Legionella guide for further information.

Version 1	Issue Date: 20.05.2020	Revision Date: 20.02.2021	Page 1 of 3
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START-UP CHECKLIST	YES	NO	N/A	CORRECTIVE ACTION/COMMENTS
<p>Risk Factors</p> <p>If your business has been closed for some time there could be a risk of legionella in your water systems.</p> <p>If you have any of the below risk factors corrective action will be required;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Has water been stored between 20°C and 50°C? ▪ Has water been left without routine flushing, or poor or no flow in the water system for longer than a week? ▪ Are there any outlets that create inhalable droplets such as aerosols? E.g. opening a tap, showering, indoor fountain, flushing a toilet, other equipment such as pressure washers, hoses, spray irrigation systems, footbaths. ▪ Are there any dead legs of pipework that could hold stagnant water including hose pipes. <p>If yes to any of the above refer to restarting the business below.</p>	Y	N		Exercise care and maintain a distance, wear PPE as appropriate to prevent inhalation of water vapour or droplets.
<p>Restarting the Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase the temperature of hot water systems to above 60°C if possible and drawing it through to all hot water outlets (a temperature over 60°C will kill Legionella bacteria over time) ▪ Flushing through simple hot/cold water systems with fresh mains water for several minutes. (Slowly turn tap on to prevent spray) ▪ Ensuring that the system is capable of delivering water at safe temperatures by checking temperatures ahead of reopening (also think about scalding) 				

Version 1	Issue Date: 20.05.2020	Revision Date: 20.02.2021	Page 2 of 3
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<p>For complex systems or if your risk assessment identifies this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Undertake a chemical or thermal disinfection of the water system ▪ Undertake microbiological sampling for Legionella bacteria <p>Finally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When you are satisfied the hot and cold-water systems are under control then reopen the building. ▪ Ensure you keep all documentation for the inspection and checks made 				

NB. Should you have any concerns regarding your water system you should contact a competent water treatment company.

Completed by		Date	
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Version 1	Issue Date: 20.05.2020	Revision Date: 20.02.2021	Page 3 of 3
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This document is guidance for good practice it does not constitute legal advice. You should undertake your own risk assessment before adopting or applying any of this guidance and, if necessary, seek your own legal opinion.