

Dear Colleagues,

After the recent heatwave and summer break, this alert is to serve as a reminder to schools of their legal obligations regarding water hygiene and more specifically Legionnaires' disease. This has come about after it has been reported by our contractors that a number of schools are not flushing all of their infrequently used water outlets.

What is Legionnaires' disease?

Legionnaire's disease is a pneumonia-like illness caused by the legionella bacterium, which can be fatal especially for those already in poor health.

Schools and Legionnaires' disease

Schools have hot and cold water systems that provide water for drinking, cooking, food preparation, personal hygiene and washing. Any water system that has the right environmental conditions could potentially be a source for legionella bacteria growth. The most likely route for infection is by direct inhalation of legionella bacteria carried by water droplets.

Legionnaires' disease and the law

The Health and Safety Executive have produced a wealth of information around Legionnaires' disease and its prevention. The key documents around the prevention of Legionnaires' disease in schools are the 'Approved Code of Practice and Guidance (L8)' and the technical guidance 'The control of legionella bacteria in hot and cold water systems (HSG 274 Part 2)'.

Corporate Health and Safety and Schools Property have provided schools with comprehensive guidance on the adequate and effective control of their water systems in order to minimise the risk of Legionnaires' disease. These can be found on EGfL: <https://www.egfl.org.uk/facilities/health-and-safety/legionella>. Schools must ensure that they are familiar with the guidance and that they are doing everything to minimise the risk of Legionnaires' disease, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Legionnaires' disease prevention checklist

Schools need to answer yes to the following questions to ensure that they are complying with the law:

- 1) Has a 'Responsible Person' been identified?
- 2) Has a Legionella risk assessment been carried out?
- 3) Has a Legionella site logbook been created?
- 4) Have remedial actions been taken to deal with any issues identified by the risk assessment?
- 5) Do you have systems in place for monitoring water systems?
- 6) Are you aware of work that is carried out on the water system(s) of your schools?
- 7) Do you know what actions to take if a case of Legionnaire's disease is suspected or confirmed?

In addition, the following table overleaf shows a typical written action plan for water systems found in schools:

Frequency	Actions
Weekly	All infrequently (little) used outlets (such as taps and shower heads) should be flushed for 2 minutes.
Monthly	<p>Temperature gauges on calorifiers should be read and recorded for stored, flow and return temperatures.</p> <p>Nearest and furthest (Sentinel) hot outlets should have their temperatures recorded.</p> <p>Nearest and furthest (Sentinel) cold outlets should have their temperatures recorded.</p> <p>Hot water temperatures supplied to mixer valves should be recorded.</p>
Three Monthly	Showerheads and hoses should be removed, cleaned, chlorinated and if necessary descaled. This should include emergency showers.
Six Monthly	<p>Cold water storage tank temperatures should be taken of incoming water.</p> <p>Cold water storage tank temperatures should be taken of stored water.</p> <p>Thermostatic mixer valves should be serviced.</p> <p>The logbook should be audited.</p>
Annually	<p>Calorifiers should be opened if possible and inspected for the presence of debris.</p> <p>Cold water storage tanks should be inspected for the presence of debris.</p> <p>A representative number of hot outlets should have their temperatures recorded.</p> <p>A representative number of cold outlets should have their temperatures recorded.</p>
Ongoing	<p>Maintain the logbook entering all information of monitoring, faults and remedial actions.</p> <p>Inspect the Legionella Risk Assessment and maintain.</p>
Bi-Annually	The Legionella Risk Assessment should be reviewed (as a minimum).