

Legionella Advice – Be AWARE – Be Safe!

Legionella are bacteria which cause Legionnaires' disease. This is an uncommon disease similar to pneumonia. Legionella bacteria can live in hot and cold water systems within domestic properties. Contaminated bacteria can be released into the air in an aerosol form such as from the fine spray from running taps or showers.

Below are some tips on how to help minimise the risk of Legionella bacteria developing in your domestic water supply:

- Prevent the build up of stagnant water by running all infrequently used outlets such as showers, hot and cold taps, outside taps and second toilets at least once a week. Run water very slowly for 1 minute and then on full power for 5 minutes to ensure any stagnant water lying in the pipework is cleared.
- If your hot water is supplied by a hot water cylinder, ensure the stored temperature of this is set to at least 60°C. It is very important that **you do not turn off** your hot water cylinder as this will cause the temperature to drop and bacteria will thrive increasing the risk of legionella
- The risk of contracting legionella from cold water storage is low and the bacteria thrive at a temperature above 20°C. If you do have a cold water storage tank within your own house or flat, it is recommended that the temperature of the water in the tank should be less than 20°C.
- Where possible, shower heads and attaching hoses should be dismantled, descaled and disinfected on a quarterly basis, or more regularly if required, using a standard disinfectant cleaning product.
- If a shower has not been used for a week or more, immerse the head of the shower in a basin or bath of water and turn on the shower letting the water run for 2-3 minutes. As legionella can be dispersed as an aerosol through water spray, running the shower under water will lessen the likelihood of infected particles from being released. An alternative to this method if possible, would be to take the showerhead off before flushing the outlet as normal.
- If you use any garden hoses in the summer, please ensure that you run the outside tap for at least 5 minutes before using ensure any stagnant water lying in the pipework is cleared.

Please be aware that Legionnaires' disease is extremely rare and the risk of infection is small. This risk can be further reduced however, if the steps outlined above are followed.

If you have any questions regarding this article or require any advice on preventative measures please contact our Cyclical Maintenance Team on **01387 321357**.