

# **L8 and Legionella**

Under health and safety law there is a legal requirement for all companies employing five or more people to consider the risks from legionella, that may arise from work activities and to premises controlled in connection with a business; regardless of the size of the building. The legislation applies to employers and / or persons in control of buildings (e.g. landlords). These legal duties are outlined in the L8 ACOP - Legionnaires' disease – The control of legionella bacteria in water systems

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act (1974) extends to the control of Legionella bacteria within the UK and under health and safety law, you must assess the risks from legionella bacteria that may affect your staff / residents or members of the public and take suitable precautions to reduce all risks to a minimum, this process is known as legionella risk assessment

## **As an employer or a person in control of the premises you must:**

- Identify and assess sources of legionella bacteria risk.
- Prepare a scheme, (or course of action), for preventing or controlling the risk of legionella within your premises.
- Implement and manage the legionella control scheme.
- Appoint a person to be responsible for your legionella testing, design and management of your action or management plan.
- Keep records and check that precautionary systems are effective, (continued legionella monitoring).
- If appropriate, notify the local authority that you have a cooling tower (s) on site.

## **Where are the Risks of Legionella?**

A foreseeable risk and potential for exposure to legionella bacteria exists in:

- Hot and cold water systems
- Water softeners
- Sprinkler and hose reel systems
- Indoor water features and fountains
- Emergency showers and eye wash sprays
- Lathe and machine tool coolant systems
- Water systems incorporating a cooling tower or an evaporative condenser
- Horticultural misting systems
- Ultrasonic humidifiers / foggers and water misting systems, spray humidifiers, air washers and wet scrubbers
- Dental equipment
- Car, Lorry and Bus washes
- Spa baths
- Plant and systems containing water which is likely to exceed 20°C and which may release a spray or aerosol (i.e. a cloud of droplets and/or droplet nuclei) during operation or when being maintained

## **Services:**

Aqua (Scotland) Ltd can carry out a Legionella risk assessment within your facility and implement the required management policy to ensure continued compliance with current UK regulations, L8 - the Health and Safety Executive's approved code of practice for the control of legionella bacteria in water systems. Businesses / Senior Management may be prosecuted under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 or the COSHH regulations 2002, if they do not comply.

The introduction and use of a legionella risk management plan will provide peace of mind knowing that all your staff and customers are safe from potential serious harm.

Practical solutions are provided in all aspects of water systems safety and as a result of a site survey Aqua (Scotland) Ltd will tailor a maintenance contract to ensure you comply with your legal requirements, by providing the following:

- Legionella risk assessments
- UKAS accredited microbiological testing of the water samples taken
- Written report on the findings and suggestions for treatment
- Routine monitoring and maintenance
- Water tank inspections
- Cleaning and disinfection of tanks and water delivery systems
- Repairs and Remedial Works
- Records - on site log books
- Site schematic drawings

Our customers are from a wide range of industrial sectors including manufacturing and commercial facilities, educational and healthcare estates.

## **What is Legionella?**

During the mid 1970s in America a bacteria was discovered for the first time. It was discovered in water systems. This often-fatal illness is contracted through inhalation of water droplets, which are contaminated by these bacteria. It became known as "legionnaires' disease".

Legionnaires' Disease is a potentially fatal, multi-system respiratory illness, accompanied by pneumonia. It attacks some 2 to 5% of those exposed (representative of those most susceptible) and has an average mortality rate of approximately 15 to 20%. It incubates in human hosts within 2 to 10 days of exposure and will not abate without medication. Certain groups of people are known to be at a higher risk of contracting Legionnaires disease, for example, men appear more susceptible than women, as do those over 45 years of age, smokers, alcoholics, diabetics and those with cancer or chronic respiratory or kidney disease.

When diagnosed and treated early, the disease responds well to the antibiotic erythromycin and many of the newer macrolide antibiotics.

As the then Director of the HSE stated "Legionnaires' disease is an illness we have managed to create for ourselves. In designing and constructing systems to control our environment we have created conditions, which can be ideal for the proliferation of Legionella. Those systems must be properly monitored and maintained. That is the key to controlling the disease."

**Genuine cases of Legionella outbreaks in the UK can be found at:**

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/cumbria/6520535.stm> and <http://www.hse.gov.uk/legionnaires/>

Should you require additional information on Legionella and how Aqua (Scotland) Ltd can help you reduce the risks associated with it please contact us on **01506 430164**

**Legionnaires' disease is "a pneumonia which has serious effects and is fatal in 10-12% of cases." [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)**

**On average there are approximately 200-250 reported cases of legionnaires' disease each year in the UK. [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)**