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	LEGIONNAIRES DISEASE	

Policy Statement

Legionellosis is the collective name given to the pneumonia-like illness caused by legionella bacteria. This includes the most serious Legionnaires' disease, as well as the similar but less serious conditions of Pontiac fever and Lochgoilhead fever. Legionnaires' disease is a potentially fatal form of pneumonia and everyone is susceptible to 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
- Anyone with an impaired immune system.

Location and Sources of Legionella Bacteria

The bacterium *Legionella pneumophila* and related bacteria are common in natural water sources such as rivers, lakes and reservoirs, but usually in low numbers. Since legionella bacteria are widespread in the environment, they may also contaminate and grow in purpose-built water systems such as cooling towers, evaporative condensers, hot and cold water systems and whirlpool spas. There are also a number of other systems that may pose a risk to exposure to legionella, e.g. humidifiers, air washers, emergency showers, indoor ornamental fountains.

Any water system that has the right environmental conditions could potentially be a source for legionella bacteria growth. There is a reasonably foreseeable legionella risk in your water system in the following circumstances:

- Water is stored or re-circulated as part of your system
- The water temperature in all or some part of the system is between 20–45°C
- There are sources of nutrients such as rust, sludge, scale and organic matters
- The conditions are likely to encourage bacteria to multiply
- It is possible for water droplets to be produced and, if so, if they can be dispersed over a wide area, eg showers and aerosols from cooling towers
- It is likely that any of your employees, service users, visitors etc. are more susceptible to infection due to age, illness, a weakened immune system etc. and whether they could be exposed to any contaminated water droplets.

The Policy

SJD Homes recognise its responsibility and duty to take appropriate precautions to prevent or control the risk of exposure to legionella.

We use an external consultant to identify the risks in our water system and they understand our water systems and associated equipment.

The risk assessment includes

- Any potential risk sources
- Any controls currently in place to control risks
- Monitoring, inspection and maintenance procedures
- Records of the monitoring results, inspection and checks carried out
- A review date

If the risks are insignificant and comply with the law, the assessment is considered complete.

It is SJD Homes' responsibility to ensure the external controller is a competent person able to carry out the assessment and required treatment

Records include

- Person(s) responsible for the risk assessment, managing, and implementing the written scheme
- Any significant findings of the risk assessment
- The written control scheme and its implementation
- The date and results of any inspection, test or checks carried out
- Details concerning the state of operation of the system, i.e. in use/not in use.

These records should be retained throughout the period for which they remain current and for at least two years after that period. Records of dates and results of the inspections must be kept for 5 years.

If there is a case of Legionellosis in a service user or employee, it must be reported this under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR).

Further Information

Legionnaires' disease. The control of legionella bacteria in water systems. Approved Code of Practice and guidance L8 (Third edition) HSE Books, 2001. ISBN 978 0 7176 1772 2: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/L8.htm

Related Policies

Health and Safety

Accidents and Incidents Reporting (RIDDOR)

Training

All staff cover the importance of the precautions put in place to prevent the spread of legionella in their Health and Safety training