

Guidance for managing Legionella in building water systems during the COVID-19 pandemic

If buildings and facilities have been closed, water could stagnate and cause *Legionella* to grow.

- This could cause serious health problems on re-opening
- If it does, there could also be legal consequences for your business

The procedures you follow now will have an impact on how soon you can open your facilities without causing harm to health.

Maintenance of hot and cold water systems during shut-down, where possible, is likely to reduce the measures (such as flushing and disinfection) you need to take to re-open safely. If maintenance is not possible, for example because employees have been furloughed, you will need to follow strict procedures to make the system safe *before* putting it back into use. In either case, following the guidance shown below will avoid causing health problems.

This is important for businesses that have high risk hot and cold water systems such as hotels, spa pools, swimming pools and anywhere with showers. This includes hotel rooms that have not been occupied, even if the rest of the building has been in use. Larger buildings, even without such features, are more likely to have more complex water systems and more potential for stagnant water. Anything that creates fine water droplets (known as aerosols) can infect people with *Legionella* if suitable controls are not in place, including (but not limited to) showers, sinks, spas, power washers, indoor fountains.

Guidance

- Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH): [Legionnaires' disease: lockdown risks and re-opening safely](#)
- European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (ESCMID): [ESGLI Guidance for managing Legionella in building water systems during the COVID-19 pandemic V2.0](#)
- **Pools:** Advice on managing closed pools is available through the [PWTAG website](#)
- The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) website has general guidance on *Legionella* control:
 - [Legionella and landlords' responsibilities](#)
 - [Legionnaires' Disease – a brief guide for Duty Holders](#)
 - [Legionnaires' Disease. The Control of Legionella Bacteria in Water Systems – Approved Code of Practice and Guidance \(L8\)](#)
 - [Legionnaires' Disease – Technical Guidance \(HSG 274\)](#)
 - [Control of Legionella and other infectious agents in spa-pool systems \(HSG 282\)](#)