

Legionnaires Disease

steps you can take to prevent it



As your landlord, we need to ensure you are aware of the possible causes and symptoms of Legionnaires Disease, so you can report any problems or concerns you may have to us.

What is it?

Legionnaires Disease is a potentially fatal form of Pneumonia caused by Legionella Bacteria. It is caused by inhaling small droplets of water from sources contaminated by Legionella.

Although it can affect anyone, it most commonly affects the elderly, people with chest or lung problems and people with suppressed immune systems e.g. people undergoing Chemotherapy. Not everyone who is exposed to Legionella bacteria will become ill.

Legionnaires Disease is not contagious, and you cannot catch it from drinking water.

In an average year there are approximately 500 reported cases.

Where is it found?

Legionella Bacteria occurs in the natural environment in Rivers, Lochs and other bodies of water. It can also contaminate and grow in cooling towers, and hot and cold water services.

Legionella bacteria exist naturally in low numbers in all water supplied to homes. With normal regular use this normally causes no problems. The risk occurs where bacteria can increase and multiply to dangerous levels.

Main risk areas in the home are shower heads, taps and even washing machine and dishwasher pipes. Ideal conditions for bacteria to increase is where water

between 20C and 45 degrees C stagnates, and where there is sludge, scale and rust for the bacteria to feed on.

What can I do?

- Prior to going away, you should turn off water at stopcock. Turn off boiler at mains and open all taps to empty pipework. On return, ensure taps are closed, turn on stopcock to fill pipework and carry flushing as below.
- Ensure all taps and showers are used at least on a weekly basis. If not used regularly or following a period of non use e.g. a holiday, flushing should be carried out without causing a spray for 2-3 minutes. To reduce the risk of creating a spray which could be inhaled, showers should be carefully discharged into a drain.
- Keep Taps and shower heads clean and free from Lime scale, mould or Algae growth.
- Keep hot water on your boiler system at a temperature of 60 degrees c or greater. Warning! Beware of scalding!
- Report any rust or unusual deposits flowing from your water outlets.

Further information

The Health and safety executive is the government body responsible for water hygiene and Legionnaires Disease. Further advice can be viewed on their website

www.hse.gov.uk/legionnaires