



UK Health
Security
Agency

Food, Water and Environmental (FW&E) Microbiology Services

Safe water supply guidance

For all organisations that rely on a safe water supply to undertake their business activities

What is the risk?

A potential health risk relates to Legionella in water systems, particularly those that have had low usage.

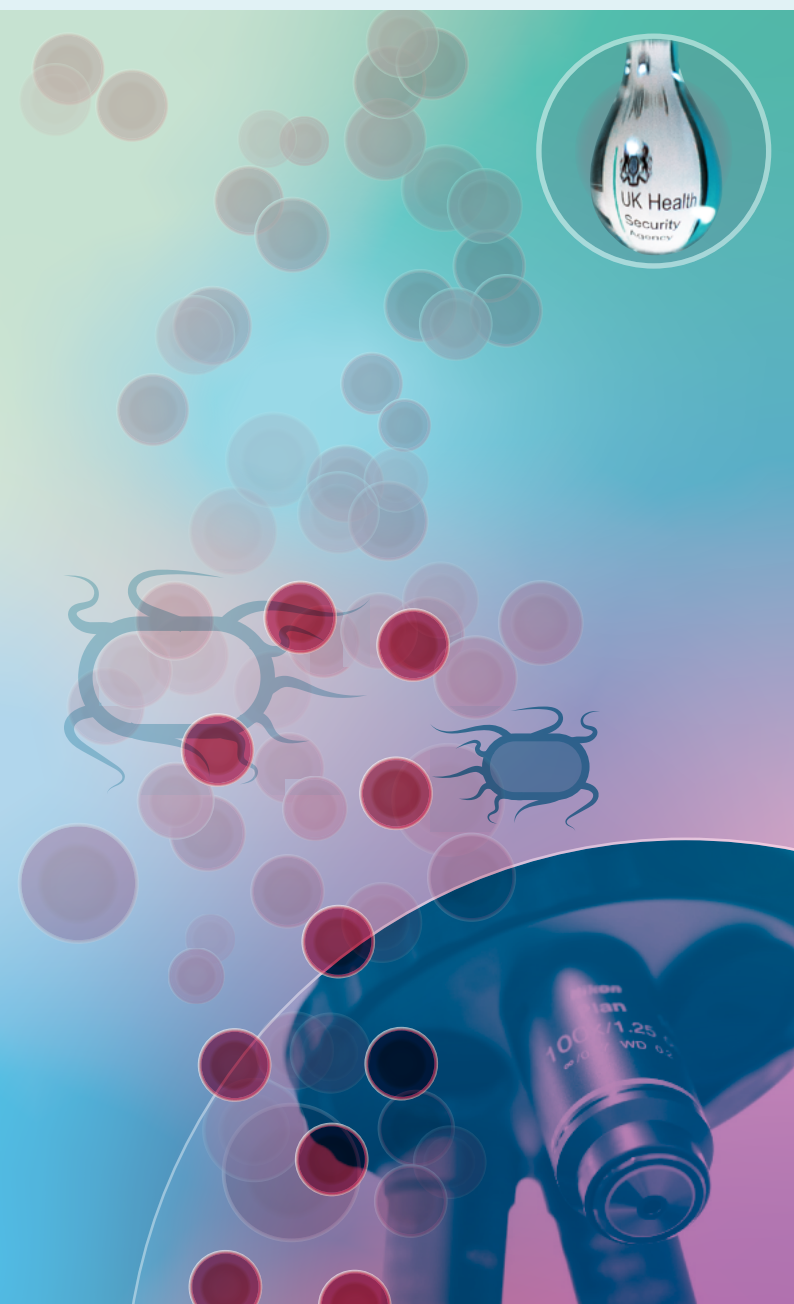
Buildings should have in place a risk assessment and a Water Safety Plan, but dormant water systems will result in bacterial growth, especially in warmer weather. Legionella, which is naturally present in water systems, causes Legionnaires' disease which is fatal in 10% of cases. This can be avoided by following appropriate advice.

Who needs to take action?

- **dental practices**
- **hair dressers**
- **hotels**
- **gyms**
- **sports clubs**
- **office buildings (especially those with shower facilities)**
- **any organisation that has a water supply and is currently shut down**

What action will reduce the risk?

Regular flushing of the premises water system is required throughout the period of low usage. However, all aspects of the water management system need to be reviewed regularly, and before re-opening a business that has been closed, and necessary action will be dependent on the complexities of the system. This may be done by a combination of workers employed by the organisation if they have the necessary skills and knowledge. However, if a water system requires disinfection then a water consultant will be needed.





Expertise and support is available from UKHSA's Food, Water and Environmental Microbiology Services. This includes:

- access to laboratory services
- provision of expert advice
- expert assistance in investigation and control

Based in three sites across the country our specialist laboratories can offer a microbiology testing service to meet the needs of those who require our support.

All FW&E laboratories are accredited through the United Kingdom Accreditation Services (UKAS) to ISO 17025:2017 and have 'Official Control' status.

Other bacterial contaminants may cause risk to public health as well as Legionella. We are happy to be contacted for advice about these and any other concerns you may have relating to water safety.

To find out about how we can help you please contact:

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London:

020 832 76548/76550

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01980 616766

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Central Office:

020 832 76549

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- Food, Water and Environmental Microbiology Laboratories

Advice and support is also available from the following organisations:

- **Health and Safety Executive (HSE)**
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/legionnaires/what-you-must-do.htm>
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg458.pdf>
- **NHS (medical advice if you think you may have Legionnaires' Disease)**
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/legionnaires-disease/> or you can call 111
- **UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA)**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/legionnaires-disease-guidance-data-and-analysis>
- **Local council environmental health teams**
<https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>
- **ESGLI Guidance for managing Legionella in water systems during the COVID-19 pandemic**
https://www.esamid.org/fileadmin/src/media/PDFs/3Research_Projects/ESGLI/COVID_buidling_water_system_guidance_27_3_20_v4_DS.pdf
- **Management of waterborne pathogens in dental care during the COVID-19 pandemic**
<https://www.legionellacontrol.org.uk/data/pdf/Advice-for-Dental-Surgeries-120420-v01.0-2.pdf>

UKHSA is responsible for protecting every member of every community from the impact of infectious diseases, chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear incidents and other health threats. We provide intellectual, scientific and operational leadership at national and local level, as well as on the global stage, to make the nation health secure. UKHSA is an executive agency, sponsored by the Department of Health and Social Care.