Legionella and Water Safety

A Guide for Tenants

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What is Legionella?

Legionella is a type of bacteria that can get into your water supply. The bacteria in water systems can grow when water is stored between 20°C and 45°C where there is limescale, or other debris, which the bacteria can feed on.

There is a low risk of legionella being in your home water supply. This is because most homes do not have complex water systems, do not store a large amount of water, and the water is used often. Despite the lower risk, it is still important that steps are taken to keep the risk low. This can be done by:

- keeping the hot water supply hot
- keeping the cold water supply cold
- keeping good circulation of water

What are the effects of Legionella?

When legionella bacteria enters a water supply, it can cause illnesses such as Pontiac Fever or Legionnaires Disease. These have flu-like symptoms and, in more serious cases, pneumonia. Although rare, it can be fatal. These illnesses are not contagious. These illnesses cannot be contracted by drinking water contaminated by the legionella bacteria; they are contracted as a result of breathing in contaminated water droplets. Those most at risk from falling ill due to legionella bacteria are:

- people over 45 years of age
- people who smoke
- people suffering from chronic respiratory or kidney disease
- people with diabetes, lung or heart disease
- anyone who is immunocompromised

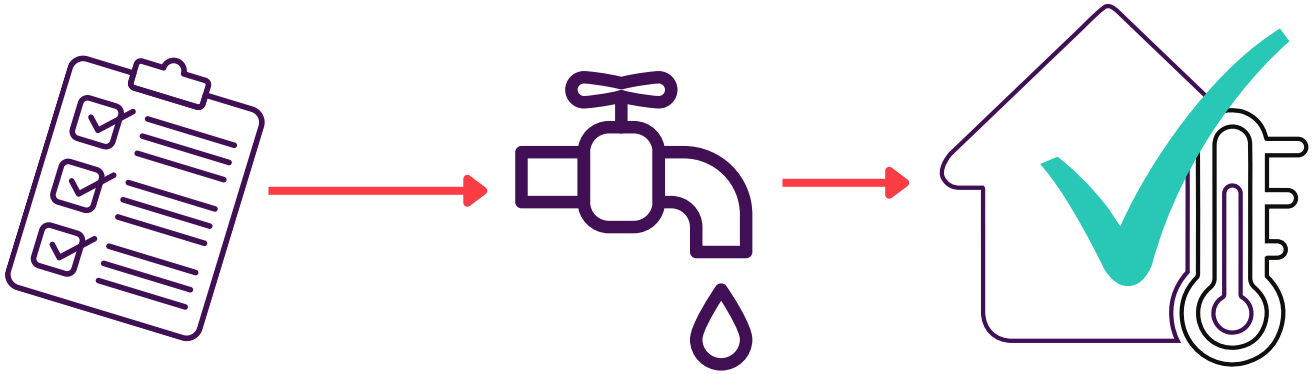
How do CCHA reduce the risk of Legionella?

We complete Water Hygiene risk assessments on all water systems that may be considered more complex. For example flats where there are centralised water storage tanks and heating systems. These assessments highlight any areas where we need to intervene, such as identifying unused pipework which may cause water to stagnate.
Our contractors also complete regular water temperature monitoring.

The contractors will check the temperature of stored water, and may choose properties at random to check the tap water temperature. This is to make sure that the water is reaching your property at the right temperature. Our hygiene contractors will also clean and disinfect communal water tanks and service valves every year. This is to make sure that systems are clean, descaled and any built up sediment is purged.

Any communal water outlets, such as taps or communal toilets, will be flushed weekly by our appointed contractors. This is a simple process where the water is turned on for a few minutes to purge any potential stagnant water from the pipes.

Please allow access to our contractors for this to be completed.



How can you reduce the risk of Legionella at home?



Make sure the thermostat of your hot water tank is set to at least 60°C. This temperature kills legionella bacteria, and is the temperature set by our heating contractors during their annual visit. Please do not change this temperature.



Keep all shower heads and taps clean and free from limescale to stop bacteria from growing. Showerheads should be stowed in their designated holder when not in use. Make sure the showerhead does not touch potentially contaminated surfaces, such as the shower tray, floor, or other surrounding surfaces. As a guide, shower head cleaning should be completed at least once every 3 months.



Run garden taps weekly and drain hosepipes of water after use. Also avoid storing them in direct sunlight.



If you leave your home for more than a week, run all your taps for a few minutes when you come back. You should also run taps that are not being used on a weekly basis. To safely flush a shower head that's not been used for more than a week, place it down on the shower or bath floor before turning it on. Toilets should also be flushed with the lid down following a period of low or non-use.



Take care if using home hot tubs. The water within these is kept at a temperature that's ideal for bacteria to grow and multiply. If you do use one, please follow the manufacturer's guidelines for maintenance, cleaning, and disinfection, as well as regularly draining down when not in use.

Safe use of Water Butts

This guide helps reduce the risk of legionella and keep your water butt clean.

1 Regular care

- Keep the lid securely on to stop debris, insects and animals getting in.
- Keep the water butt in a cool, shaded place where possible.
- Use the water regularly so it does not sit stagnant for too long.
- If it's not used for a long period, empty the butt, clean it and leave it drained down.

2 Reducing legionella risk

- Avoid creating fine spray or mist from stored rainwater.
- Use a watering can to remove water, never use spray attachments.
- Wash your hands after using the water butt.
- Clean the water butt at least once a year, and more often if it becomes dirty.
- Remove standing sludge promptly, as dirt and stangnant water increase risk.

3 How to clean your water butt

- Turn off the inlet or disconnect the downpipe if needed.
- Empty the butt as far as possible.
- Scoop out any debris left at the bottom.
- Scrub the inside with warm water and a brush or cloth.
- If you use any cleaning products, follow the product instructions carefully and rinse thoroughly.
- Reconnect, refill and make sure the lid is on properly.

4 Do not use water butt for . . .

- DRINKING
- COOKING
- FILLING PADDLING POOLS
- HANDWASHING
- CHILDREN'S PLAY

WATER BUTT WATER IS NOT DRINKING WATER

If in doubt, get in touch.

If you have concerns about your water system, or you think something isn't quite right, please get in touch with us. Please let us know immediately if any of the following occur:

- Cold water runs warm after pipework has been flushed;
- Your boiler or hot water cylinder is not working properly, particularly if the water is not coming out of the taps at a lower temperature than usual;
- Your water is discoloured.

When in doubt, contact our Property Customer Support Team on 029 2046 8490. We'll be happy to discuss your concerns, guide you on the best course of action, and make sure any necessary repairs are carried out.





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