

Guidance on Legionnaires' Disease for Tenants of Rented Domestic Accommodation

Domestic hot and cold water systems can provide an environment where Legionella bacteria can grow. This can cause Legionnaires' Disease which is a potentially fatal form of pneumonia caused by inhalation of small drops of contaminated water containing Legionella bacteria. The bacteria are dormant below 20°C and do not survive above 60°C. This advice sheet gives tips for residents of rented domestic accommodation such as houses, bungalows and flats in small blocks.

**Most Importantly, make sure that:
Hot Water in the system remains hot.
Cold water is kept cold.
The water is kept circulated**

In Particular, it is important that you –

- Do not interfere with the settings on your boiler or hot water system. The hot water should be set so that the water is heated up to 60°C
- Tell us or your landlord if:
 - The cold water is still running warm after you initially run off any water which may have accumulated in the pipes. It should not be above 20°C
 - There are problems, debris or discolouration in the water.
 - The boiler or hot water tank are not working properly, particularly, if the water is not coming out of the taps at a sufficiently high temperature. It should come out at a temperature of 50°C after it has run for a minute at the latest.

Where showers are fitted –

- If they are used only occasionally then flush them through by running them for at least two minutes every week. Keep out of the way whilst this is being done as far as possible. If the shower head can be unclipped and placed over the drain this would be recommended.
- Clean the shower head periodically, descale and disinfect it. This should be done at least every six months.

Where a property is left vacant for any time, e.g. extended holiday make sure that when occupied again at the outset both hot and cold water systems are flushed through by running all outlets for at least two minutes.