



EFCC

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RISK OF LEGIONNAIRE'S DISEASE IN UNUSED OR VACATED BUILDINGS

Why is this important for you?

- There is a risk of Legionnaires' Disease from hot and cold water systems left untouched in unused or vacated buildings
- You need to decide whether your hot and cold water system is low risk or high risk
- You need to follow the appropriate advice below
- You have a legal duty to protect your employees, tenants, contractors and visitors to your building from the risk of Legionnaires' Disease

How can I tell what the risk of legionella bacteria is in my water system?

The risk of Legionella bacteria being present and therefore, the potential to contract Legionnaires' Disease, is low in a small building, like a housing unit or small premises:

- with a small domestic-type water system;
- where daily water usage occurs and is sufficient to turn over the entire system;
- where cold water is directly from a wholesome source - no stored water tanks;
- where hot water is fed from instantaneous heaters, e.g., electric showers, combi-boilers, etc., or low volume water heaters that supply outlets at 50 °C;
- where the only outlets are toilets and wash hand basins.

The risk is higher and there may be issues with Legionella in a building or premises:

- where the water system is large and/or complex
- if water is stored or re-circulated as part of your system
- where there are deadlegs in the system (lengths of pipes that are abandoned, redundant, or have infrequently used outlets)
- where the water temperature in all or some parts of the system may be between 20 °C and 45 °C
- where there are deposits that can support bacterial growth, such as rust, sludge, scale and organic matter
- if it is possible for water droplets (aerosols) to be produced, and if so, if they can be dispersed (e.g. by showers)
- if it is likely that employees, contractors, visitors, etc., could be exposed to water droplets.

For further guidance go to the link below or, **if you fall into the higher risk category**, contact your heating engineer for advice before re-opening your premises.

Source: <https://www.bexley.gov.uk/risk-of-legionnaires-disease-in-unused-or-vacated-buildings>
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