

# Managing the risk of Legionnaire's Disease during the COVID-19 restrictions



As a result of the Government restrictions to limit the spread of COVID-19, many workplaces have had to close at very short notice. Even those premises which continue to operate may have reduced the number of visits from their maintenance contractors.

These changes can impact the normal controls of Legionella bacteria in water systems. Exposure to Legionella bacteria can cause Legionnaires' disease which is a potentially fatal form of pneumonia. To ensure the safety of users of these workplaces, while **still operating or on the resumption of operations**, it is essential that all reasonably practicable control measures are maintained.

This document aims to direct you to guidance which will assist you in implementing appropriate controls for your work activities. These control measures can help to keep your employees, and others in and around your premises, safe.

## Where you may find Legionella bacteria

The items listed below are some of the most common locations where Legionella bacteria will be found in a workplace (**NB:** the list is not exhaustive and your own risk assessment should identify the relevant locations in your workplace):

- Showers, taps and toilets;
- Spa pools;
- Humidifiers;
- Fountains and water features
- Misting systems, sprinklers, etc.;
- Firefighting sprinklers/hose reels;
- Vehicle washes and power hoses.
- Wet cooling systems (e.g. cooling towers and evaporative condensers)

## Guidance

Essential information is available via the following links:

- Health and Safety Executive - <https://www.hse.gov.uk/legionnaires/workplace-risks.htm>
- Legionella Control Association - <https://www.legionellacontrol.org.uk/news/90/>
- European Society for Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Disease - [https://www.escmid.org/fileadmin/src/media/PDFs/3Research\\_Projects/ESGLI/COVID\\_buidling\\_water\\_system\\_guidance\\_27\\_3\\_20\\_v4\\_DS\\_pk.pdf](https://www.escmid.org/fileadmin/src/media/PDFs/3Research_Projects/ESGLI/COVID_buidling_water_system_guidance_27_3_20_v4_DS_pk.pdf)
- Pool Water Treatment Advisory Group - <https://www.pwtag.org/guidance-on-temporary-pool-closure/>

Alternatively, if you wish to discuss the management of risk associated with Legionella bacteria and Legionnaire's Disease, this Service can be contacted on 0141 287 1059 or by email to [healthandsafety@glasgow.gov.uk](mailto:healthandsafety@glasgow.gov.uk)