

**Legionella**<sup>®</sup>  
control

**Hotels, Holiday & Hospitality Premises  
Recommissioning Water Systems  
Post Covid-19 Lock-Down**



## Introduction

**This guidance has been prepared to assist owners and managers of hotels, holiday and hospitality premises deal with water safety issues as their buildings are recommissioned following extended periods of low or no occupancy due to Covid-19 lock-downs. The guidance sets-out a number of practical steps those responsible for workplace safety should consider as they recommission their buildings.**

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In the UK it is important to remember that the Health and Safety at Work Act still applies during this period of uncertainty and Dutyholders must continue to take reasonably practicable steps to control risk from Legionella.

Dutyholders implicated in an outbreak of Legionnaires' disease resulting from actions taken for COVID-19 precautions are unlikely to have any exemption from prosecution.

*This document should be read in conjunction with our previous COVID-19 guidance, ACOP L8 and HSG274.*

## Recommissioning water systems

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It is essential that when hotels and other hospitality premises reopen following extended periods of low or no occupancy that any water system serving the premises is not simply put straight back into use as this could significantly increase the potential for an outbreak of Legionnaires' disease.

During any period of shutdown it would be sensible to formulate a recommissioning plan for each water system to allow safe start-up and assurance to staff, guests and other stakeholders that it is safe.

Any plan for recommissioning buildings must take into account the safety of the operatives carrying out the work. It is foreseeable that the hazard present within water systems in this situation would be greater than normally expected. Reasonably practicable measures such as limiting aerosol, minimising exposure and use of Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE) should be considered.



## Higher risk systems including spas and evaporative cooling systems

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Water systems including spa pools and evaporative cooling systems such as cooling towers present a higher risk. They should already have robust start-up and shut-down procedures in place and the expectation is that these will be followed during the recommissioning process.

## Hot and cold water systems

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The minimum expectation for small, simple hot and cold water systems would be flushing through with fresh mains water.

Larger hotels, those with storage tanks, showers, calorifiers and more complex pipework, the expectation is likely to be for more extensive flushing followed by cleaning and disinfection.

## Flushing

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During flushing of water systems all valves should be operated in the fully open position so that any particulate matter can be flushed through. Of particular importance are float-operated or other restrictive valves which need to be manually opened to ensure clearing of particulates and prevent fouling of the valves.

Where a clearing velocity cannot be achieved, consideration should be given to removal of valves to enable an effective flush.

## Cleaning and disinfection

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Where cleaning and disinfection is carried out, it is very important to monitor the decrease in disinfectant level over the course of the contact time. Loss of more than 40% disinfectant concentration could indicate the influence of biofilm in the water system. See BSI PD855468 for more guidance. The British Standard is also valid for all stages of a water system's life cycle. For example, it



should be considered when a new water system is designed for introduction in a new building. It is also important during the construction and installation of that system.

## Empty buildings

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Where hotels and other hospitality premises have been empty for some time and during warm weather, it is likely that an increase in bacteria levels and biofilm will occur.

These water systems may require more than a simple disinfection at 50ppm of chlorine for an hour to be successful.

## Record keeping and validation testing

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In all cases where water systems are being recommissioned it is sensible to collect evidence to prove/reassure staff, guests and other stakeholders that the recommissioning process has been effective.

Water sampling for Legionella bacteria to BS7592 should be considered for recommissioning plans to validate the effectiveness of the process.

As per HSG274 part 2, water samples should be taken and tested 2-7 days following recommissioning and not on the day of disinfection. Follow up sample testing may need to be considered as part of the recommissioning plan.

## Elevated risk

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**Our water safety experts believe there is the potential for multiple outbreaks of Legionnaires' disease following the relaxation of lock-down precautions if actions taken now are not carefully considered.**

**The Health and Safety at Work Act still applies and Dutyholders must continue to take reasonably practicable precautions to control the risks from Legionella throughout this time. If you are in any doubt about what to do, or require specialist assistance please do not hesitate to contact the water safety and legionella experts at Legionella Control International – 0330 223 36 86.**



## Legionella and water safety specialists

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The water safety specialists at Legionella Control International support hotel and hospitality business owners and those responsible for health and safety in the workplace on all legionella and water safety issues.

Our risk management solutions support those responsible for the control of waterborne pathogens and other water safety risks, helping them to protect staff, guests and others and so meet their compliance obligations in this specialist area.

We deliver professional water safety solutions, legionella risk assessments, water testing, independent compliance auditing, City & Guilds training, expert witness support and other environmental risk management services that help keep people safe.

**To speak with one of our water safety specialists' call us today on 0330 223 36 86 or email us at [info@legionellacontrol.com](mailto:info@legionellacontrol.com).**

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