

# Legionella



Our advice on what our tenants,  
leaseholders and shared owners should  
do in their home

# Introduction

We have produced this leaflet to provide some general advice about Legionella and how to prevent it in your own home, irrespective of whether you are a tenant, leaseholder or shared owner.

This leaflet is not intended to scare anyone but cases are often reported in the press and we are obligated to advise you of measures to prevent the growth of the Legionella bacteria.

In addition, we want to tell you about what we do as your landlord, where applicable.

The use of 'you' applies to all of our occupiers whether you are a tenant, leaseholder or a shared owner.

The use of 'us' or 'we' refers to Sandbourne Housing Association.

## So, what is Legionella?

According to the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) website, the Legionella bacteria (along with some others) is one common in natural water sources such as rivers, lakes and reservoirs. However, the conditions are rarely right for people to catch the bacteria from these sources.

The bacteria may also be found in purpose-built water systems, including hot and cold water systems and spa pools etc. In this environment, where water may not be stored at the correct temperature, the risks of this bacteria growing are higher.

This is normally in places where the bacteria can grow, for example where there is rust, sludge, scale or stagnant water, etc, and where water is being stored in parts of a system between 20-45°C.

The Legionella bacteria can develop into Legionnaires disease, which can, in severe cases, result in a fatal form of pneumonia.

## How do you catch it?

Legionnaires disease is contracted by inhaling small droplets of water (aerosols), suspended in the air, containing the bacteria.

## What can you do to prevent this?

You need to reduce the risk, which is quite small, of the Legionella bacteria being able to grow in your home and the following are some examples of what is advised:

- If you move into a new home which hasn't been occupied for a while, it is always a good idea to run the bath and sink taps (hot and cold) for five minutes to flush the water (and possible bacteria) through. You should do this for your shower as well.
- If you've been away on holiday for a week or more, it's a good idea to flush your water system through, starting at the top of the house (where applicable): flush the toilet (best to have the toilet lid down); and run the hot and cold water bath and taps (kitchen as well) for a couple of minutes. You should do this for your shower as well.
- If your shower hasn't been used for a couple of weeks, it's a good idea to remove the shower head and clean/disinfect this as well using an appropriate shower head cleaner. Ideally, you should clean/disinfect/descale your shower head every three to four months.

Please note that shower heads are your responsibility and we will **not** clean or replace these for you.

## What else might be affected?

Whirlpool baths, garden hoses, humidifiers and any other water where it is allowed to rest and become stagnant.

## What if I live in a block of flats?

We have procedures in place to test all communal water supplies on a regular basis. This includes communal kitchens, communal toilets/sinks, and guest room showers etc. We will also pre-set water temperatures. We also test flats that are at the end of a water supply run.

## Need more information?

For further information:

You can write to us at our registered office:

Beech House, 28-30 Wimborne Road, Poole, BH15 2BU

Email: [info@sandbourne.org.uk](mailto:info@sandbourne.org.uk)

Website: [www.sandbournehousingassociation.org.uk](http://www.sandbournehousingassociation.org.uk)

Telephone: 01202 671222

Please note that telephone calls to the registered office number above may be recorded for information and training purposes.

In addition, we do have a range of other leaflets on specific topics, available on our website or upon request from our office.

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