

Melville Housing Association



Policy: Legionella Management

Subject:	Legionella Management
Section:	Property Services
Objective:	To ensure our tenant's homes are safe through conducting risk assessments for Legionella and taking necessary actions to limit this risk.
Relevant Legislation	Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974 The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health regulations 2002 Management of Health & Safety at Work regulations 1999
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1.0 Background

- 1.1 Legionnaires' disease is a potentially fatal form of pneumonia which is contracted by inhaling small droplets of water containing the legionella bacteria.
- 1.2 Legionella bacteria can be present in domestic and commercial hot and cold water systems. If conditions are favourable, the bacteria may multiply to dangerous levels in 9-10 days and it is possible to contract Legionnaires' disease or the less harmful Pontiac fever as a result of exposure to contaminated water.
- 1.3 As a registered landlord, we have a legal responsibility to take measures to ensure our properties are free from health and safety hazards which includes taking measures to combat Legionnaires' Disease.

2.0 Identification and assessment of risk

- 2.1 Risk assessments to establish the risk of legionella should include identifying potential sources of transmission and preventing conditions that may allow the legionella bacteria to multiply such as:
 - The presence of the bacteria;
 - Condition of the water and the existence of suitable conditions for the organism to grow and multiply in the storage and distribution systems (e.g. legionella will multiply at water temperatures between 20°C and 45°C);
 - Means of creating an aerosol or small breathable droplet such as the ones from a shower, fire-sprinkling system, hosepipes, spray taps in sinks and wash-hand basins etc.
- 2.2 Our stock does not contain buildings with larger scale water systems such as sheltered housing and our self contained general needs properties typically have a high turnover of water usage which acts as a deterrent against the growth of legionella.
- 2.3 Risk assessments for Melville (see Appendix 1) will be carried out in those buildings where there is a potential for exposure to legionella as follows:
 - Cold water tanks in blocks of flats.
 - Void properties
 - The Corn Exchange office

These have been considered to be low risk.

The Property Manager will be responsible for assessing and monitoring these risks.

3.0 Preventing or controlling the risk

3.1 We will design, maintain and operate water services under conditions which prevents or controls the growth and multiplication of legionella bacteria and will:

- Avoid water temperature and conditions that help legionella growth (recommended temperature for hot water is 60°C (thermostats are set above 50°C and checked at the annual service), or below 20°C for distribution (water can be stored with adequate insulation));
- Ensure that water cannot stagnate anywhere in the system by keeping pipe lengths as short as possible or removing them where applicable (known as dead-legs, which occur when water services leading from the main circulation water system to taps or appliances are only used intermittently);
- Avoid usage of certain materials that are prone to legionella growth;
- Ideally, water should be circulated at 50°C, with scalding hazards controlled by fitting thermostatic radiator valves (TRV) and thermostatic mixing valves (TMV) to the water supply for baths, showers.

3.2 If a risk of legionella is identified, actions should be taken to remove the risk if reasonably practicable to do so. If the risk cannot be removed, a programme of control measures must be put in place that is proportionate to the level of risk. This will include a systematic approach to flushing systems, checking water temperatures and sampling water supplies where appropriate.

3.2 In relation to the risk assessments to be carried out the following control measures will apply:

- Communal Cold Water Storage Tanks in blocks of flats will be inspected bi-annually by our plumbers to ensure they remain in an acceptable condition with any defects reported for remedial action.
- Void properties which remain empty for more than 8 weeks will have their water systems drained down. For all void properties, our voids team will ensure that all toilets are flushed, showers and all cold and hot water taps will be run for 5 minutes with care being taken to check the drainage capacity of the property.
- If the void is not relet within one week, a member of staff will ensure all toilets are flushed and cold and hot water taps are run for 5 minutes. These actions will be carried out at the same time as the accompanied viewing or tenancy sign up is undertaken and details of the time and date they were undertaken and the member of staff undertaking these actions will be recorded as part of the tenancy sign up paperwork.
- The office at The Corn Exchange been assessed as low risk. The toilets and hot and cold water taps are normally used regularly whilst the shower head is cleaned and run for 5 minutes each week by the cleaner. A record of these actions will be kept.

- When the office has been closed for more than a week, the Manager re-opening the office will run all water systems and flush the toilets when first entering the building.

4.0 Response to an Outbreak

- 4.1 In the event of an outbreak of legionella, the Property Manager will co-ordinate an emergency and/or contingency plan that should include:
- Identification of people who have been or might have been exposed.
 - Arrange to take water samples from the relevant premises by a suitably qualified contractor
 - Notifying the Health and Safety Executive and Midlothian Council Environmental Health Department.

In the Property Manager's absence, the Head of Property Services will assume this role.

5.0 Training

- 5.1 Staff whose duties require them to have a knowledge of the control of legionella will receive legionella awareness training every 3 years. This will include the property manager and property officers.

6.0 Equality & Diversity

- 6.1 We are committed to Equality and Diversity and will not discriminate in the operation of this policy on the basis of age, gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion, marital status, family circumstances, political or sexual orientation, medical condition or disability. We aim to promote equal opportunities and comply with all current legal requirements relating to equal opportunities.

7.0 Review of Policy

- 7.1 The Head of Property Services will ensure this policy is reviewed every three years or earlier if there are any changes to legislation. The Senior Management Group have delegated authority to approve minor changes to this policy. Significant changes will be submitted to the Board for approval.

Appendix 1

Reducing the Risk of Legionella

	Nature of Hazard	Who Might be Harmed?	Control Measures
1.	Growth of legionella bacteria in communal cold water tanks serving blocks of flats	Contractors working on such tanks and residents receiving water from such tanks	We have a data base of where such tanks are located. Where possible, following installation of combi boilers and with permission of any owners in the block, the tanks & dead legs are capped or removed.
		Identified as low risk as tanks only supply cold water to baths & basins, which are used frequently by residents.	Our plumbers will undertake a bi-annual check of these tanks e.g. to check lids are tight fitting, there is no evidence of rust. This check will be recorded on the Annual Check Spreadsheet held in Property Drive P:\Annual safety checks Regular information given in tenant's newsletters on running all taps & showers, especially if away from property for more than a week
2.	Growth of legionella bacteria in void properties	Contractors working in void properties and new tenants moving in Identified as low risk as properties normally empty for less than 14 days	Properties which are void for more than 8 weeks will have their water systems drained down. This will be recorded on the void works order. The voids team will flush toilets and run all water systems in the property including showers for 5 minutes. This forms part of the void repair standard. If the void property is not relet within 1 week of the voids team finishing, the Property Officer will flush the toilet and run

			the water systems for 5 minutes prior to the new tenant moving in.
3.	The hot and cold water systems in the office can provide an environment where legionella bacteria can grow and if conditions are favourable, the bacteria can multiply and increase the risk of exposure	Staff and visitors to the office Identified as low risk	The hot and cold water systems are of modern design and there is no redundant pipework.
			Cold water temperature is below 20 degrees and hot water temperature is above 50 degrees. These temperatures help to alleviate the risk of legionella bacteria developing.
			Normally the toilets and taps are used regularly but when the office is closed for over a week, the Manager reopening the office will run the hot and cold systems and flush all toilets.
			The shower is used irregularly and the cleaner will therefore record that they have on a weekly basis, run it for 5 minutes and cleaned the shower head.