

Legionnaires' disease and your organisation

Legionnaires' disease is a form of pneumonia caused by legionella bacteria that can be fatal to those who are infected.

Legionella bacteria occurs when artificial water systems such as cooling towers, evaporative condensers, hot and cold water systems and spa pools, maintain a temperature high enough to encourage bacteria growth.

If you are the leader of an organisation, then you are the duty-holder with a legal duty of care to your employees and others. Therefore it is your responsibility to reduce the risk of exposure to a legionella contaminated source from your business operations.

The duty-holder can delegate the day-to-day management of legionella control to at least one trained and competent appointed person, known as the 'responsible person'.

Law requires the duty-holder to manage the risk and undertake at least one legionella risk assessment for the organisation's properties or plants that have water systems.

A risk assessment will consider:

- **Contamination** of the water system by legionella bacteria
- **Amplification** of legionella bacteria in the water system
- **Transmission** of legionella bacteria to humans
- **Exposure** levels of individuals to a source of transmission
- **Host susceptibility** (is there likely to be a high level of susceptible individuals exposed)

The HSE Approved Code of Practice, Legionnaires' Disease (ACOP L8), is aimed at duty-holders and if followed correctly, is regarded as a sufficient level of management to meet the organisation's duty of care and to prevent an outbreak of legionnaires' disease.

For more information on how 4see can help you reduce your businesses legionella risk please contact us on 01327 811166 or enquiry@4see.co.uk.

