

SAFETY IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY



SPA POOLS AND LEGIONELLA

As an employer it is **YOUR** responsibility to ensure that measures are in place to safeguard the health and safety of your employees and anyone else who may be affected as a result of the business undertaking.

ADVICE TO EMPLOYERS

Leeds City Council's Environmental Health Services can offer advice to local employers on the prevention of legionnaires disease. This information sheet is intended to advise those in control of the following premises where spa baths may be in use;

- Leisure centres and health clubs.
- Hotels
- Swimming pools
- Any other communal spa facilities.

WHAT IS LEGIONNAIRES DISEASE?

- Legionnaires disease is a potentially fatal pneumonia caused by legionella bacteria. It is spread by breathing in small droplets of water containing the bacteria.
- Legionella bacteria thrive and readily multiply in temperatures between 20 and 45°C. They can survive at low temperatures, but will not multiply and at temperatures above 60°C they are killed off.

WHY IS LEGIONNAIRES A PROBLEM IN SPAS?

Legionella are a particular problem in spa baths because;

- The water temperature is at an optimum for legionella growth.
- The piping for air/ water circulation provides a large surface area for bacterial growth.
- Dead skin cells and dirt accumulate, providing food for bacterial growth.
- The agitated water forms spray through which the bacteria can be breathed in.

Further advice overleaf →

ASSESSING THE RISK AND IMPLEMENTING CONTROLS

It is the responsibility of the manager of the spa facilities, to carry out a **risk assessment** of any spa systems present on site. This must include the following -

- A plan to prevent or control any risks identified
- Implement, manage and monitor measures to control the risk.
- Keep records of the assessment and any work carried out.
- Training should be given to staff on correct operation of spa facilities as well as appropriate information about the risks and how to manage them.



The risk assessment and measures implemented must be reviewed regularly.

HOW FREQUENTLY SHOULD SPA BATHS BE CHECKED?

Frequency	Check/ maintenance
Every 2 hours	Residual disinfectant levels and pH – after initial tests.
3 times a day	Water treatment (If not continual).
Daily	Water clarity (before use), automatic-dosing systems, disinfectant levels in reservoirs, filters, strainers, backwash sand filters.
Weekly	Drain, clean & disinfect whole system, clean strainers.
Monthly	Bacteriological test, clean input air filter, clean pipes, all automatic systems
Every 3 months	Filters (thoroughly).
Annually	Written procedures are up-to date, sand filter effectiveness.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- **REMEMBER** that the chemicals used to clean the water in spa baths can be hazardous. Only trained operators should work with these chemicals.
- Spray cleaning the spa bath could also expose your staff to the legionella bacteria.
- Biocide chemicals cannot automatically be emptied into sewerage systems. Consent must first be obtained from the **Environment Agency** (General Enquiry Line **0845 9333111**).
- For further information, the Health & Safety Commission has issued an official guide for all those managing cooling towers and similar systems. Entitled “**Legionnaires disease: The Control of Legionella Bacteria in Water Systems**”, it is priced £8 and is available from HSE books at www.hsebooks.co.uk and all HMSO bookshops.
- A free of charge guide for employers and self assessment audit sheets are available from the Health and Safety section of Leeds City Council on 0113 24-77791.

For further advice on preventing Legionnaires disease, or any other aspect of health and safety at work, you can contact the Health and Safety section of Environmental Health Services on (0113) 24-77791 or env.health@leeds.gov.uk