



St Luke's Housing Society Limited – Useful Information

Legionella Awareness and Prevention

What is Legionella?

Legionella is a bacterium that may be found almost anywhere in your water supply. There is no risk at all if you swallow it. However, if you **inhale** water (e.g. from shower spray or mist) you could also inhale the bacteria if it is present. If there is a high enough concentration of the bacteria it could cause Legionnaires' Disease. This is a type of pneumonia, and affects people most severely if they have a reduced ability to fight disease – for instance if they are already ill, immune-suppressed or have existing lung problems.

Should I be worried?

No. We have a range of measures in place to protect tenants from the possibility of infection. We also advise a few basic housekeeping good practice tips, so that you can protect yourself – both at home and when you are away from the House.

How does Legionella grow and become a risk?

Legionella is present in water supplies, ponds, rivers – pretty much everywhere. It poses no risk if it is present in water you drink or wash with. It is only a problem if it is inhaled, and then only if it is there in sufficient quantities.

To grow, Legionella likes:

- Stagnant water (including water pipes, especially 'dead legs')
- Temperatures of 20-45 degrees centigrade
- Scale and other debris to grow in

Legionella does not like:

- Moving water
- Temperatures below 20 degrees or above 50 degrees centigrade.

What does Saint Luke's Housing Society do to protect me?

We take a range of measures to keep all our Tenants as safe as possible.

- We periodically employ a specialist company to undertake a full survey and risk assessment. We then act on any recommendations. The last survey was last carried out in May 2018. (The cold water tank was also cleaned around this time.)
- We employ a specialist company to carry out temperature checks and to descale shower heads quarterly.
- We employ a specialist company to take samples from the calorifier (hot water tank), cold water tank and taps annually to check for legionella.
- We check temperatures each month (when the contractor does not do so on our behalf)
- We flush all water outlets (shower, taps, WC) in any flat where somebody is away for a week or more, on a weekly basis. This includes empty flats.
- We flush all water outlets which may not be used (shower, taps, WC) in the office and all common areas (including the Guest Room) on a weekly basis.
- In all cases, if there is any cause for concern highlighted by the contractor's checks or our own checks, urgent remedial action would be organised.

All of these steps are fully compliant with health and safety recommendations.

What do I need to do?

- It is helpful if you allow us access to carry out any routine temperature checks. We try to vary which flat we use, as this is good practice.
- It is advised that you allow access for quarterly descaling of your shower head.
- If there are any outlets that you don't use at least weekly (perhaps your hot water tap in the bathroom), set a time to run it each week for 2 minutes to flush any stagnant water away (and with it, any legionella growth). If you do not use your shower each week, it is probably best if you allow us to flush it each week for you.

And finally...

These measures have been in place for several years. To date we have never had any samples showing Legionella growth above safe levels. Any issues that might be identified would be dealt with as a matter of priority.

All staff receive training and update training in Legionella awareness on a regular basis.

Away from McMaster House, use the same principles. If a shower hasn't been used for some time, run it (without the spray head on it) for a couple of minutes. If there is a coiled hosepipe which hasn't been used all winter, don't use the spray on first use. Remember, it is only breathing in spray or mist of infected water that can cause a problem.