

# LEGIONELLA COMPLIANCE ISN'T VOLUNTARY

David Randlesome, National Sales Manager – Legionella Services for Legionella risk experts Swiftclean, explains the basic requirements for Legionella compliance for voluntary organisations.

CLUB  
HOUSE

It is not uncommon for volunteer-led organisations with premises, such as churches, club houses and meeting halls, to be unaware that they may need a Legionella risk assessment. Community centres and village halls often have the benefit of the oversight of a local council, but there are many more independent sports clubs, Scout and Guide groups, and places of worship which rely heavily on willing volunteers to run them. These volunteers have a host of facilities management and administrative tasks to fulfil, all in their unpaid spare time.

Some will be unaware that Legionella control should be on their 'to do' list on a regular basis.

Legionella bacteria can cause Legionnaire's Disease, which can be life threatening, especially to the elderly, the very young, and those with compromised immune systems. Legionella bacteria can be inhaled in the minute particles of water spray caused by flushing toilets or running taps and showers. There is a legal duty to prevent outbreaks of Legionella, by following the Approved Code of Practice (ACoP) L8, issued by the Health & Safety Executive.



Legionella thrives in static, tepid water, so it is important to identify any problem areas in your water system. It is a legal requirement to have a Legionella risk assessment in a building used by the public, and this should be reviewed annually to ensure that it is still current. A survey of the system will check water temperatures, ensuring that hot water is sufficiently hot, and that cold water has not been heated by factors such as solar gain. It will identify any areas of the system in which water does not circulate freely. These occur most frequently when part of the system is changed, usually to add or remove a water outlet, or where an outlet has ceased to be used. If you no longer use a water outlet, it is best to remove it.



A survey should ideally be carried out by a member of the Legionella Control Association (LCA), such as Swiftclean, as members are regularly vetted to confirm their competence.

If your facilities are not used between seasons or have a shutdown period, reopening the building should include a thorough flush and disinfection of the system to ensure that there is only uncontaminated, fresh water in the system. Flushing should be done without causing splashing or spray, so that the person carrying out the flushing routine is not exposed to potential legionella inhalation.

Should there be a legionella outbreak, there can be serious consequences. Each property should have a designated responsible person, and, in the event of an outbreak, they and their organisation can be prosecuted for negligence.

A conviction for negligence can result in a custodial sentence for the responsible person and limitless fines for the organisation.

If you use a member of the LCA to conduct a risk assessment, their documentation will act as a robust protection for both the responsible person and their organisation, as it provides evidence of your compliance with ACoP L8.

Once you know your system well, many voluntary organisations can carry out their own future testing and flushing routines and maintain their compliance with L8. However, if you have never had a survey, it would be wise to call in some expert help. Our experts are always happy to help establish a Legionella control plan that volunteers can follow.



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