

LEGIONELLA, THE BIG RISK

With our properties having been standing empty for months now, we all need to be aware of the **risk of Legionella** in the water systems. This is a HUGE RISK.

Standing water presents a risk of **Legionella bacteria** accumulating, and is particularly high risk in showers, as Legionella bacteria is dispersed in airborne water droplets, so the spray created by a shower is the perfect delivery mechanism. Anyone using a contaminated shower risks breathing in the bacteria and developing Legionnaires' disease as the bug takes hold in the lungs.

- If your shower has not been used for **a week or more**, run water from both hot and cold supplies through the shower hose and showerhead for two minutes. To ensure no spray escapes from the showerhead, run it through a bucket of water or full bath.
- If your shower has not been used for **two weeks or more**, disinfect the showerhead. The showerhead should be removed and the shower run for two minutes. The showerhead should be disinfected before being re-fitted by immersing for at least an hour in any solution designed for cleaning baby feeding bottles (e.g. Milton). Showerheads should be regularly disinfected about four times a year.
- **Raise the temperature to 60°C or higher.** Temperatures above 60°C will kill Legionella bacteria so make sure that the temperature of the hot water in your boiler/cylinder is set at a minimum of 60°C. Beware of burns and scalding and take extra care if you have children. Legionella can survive in low temperatures, but thrive at temperatures between 20°C and 45°C.
- If your property has been **empty for a while**, flush the whole water system for two minutes or more. First flush your toilet, then let the kitchen taps and the hand basin taps run for two minutes or more to let both hot and cold water pass through. Next, flush the shower through as described above. Finally, let any other taps run for two minutes.

(If you rush out and do this now, then you will obviously also need to do it again shortly before the first bookings arrive.)

www.pascuk.co.uk
chair@pascuk.co.uk

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