

Factsheet 5

Legionella Risk Management for Sport & Leisure Facilities



Not all people who take part in sporting activities are young and healthy, many exercise to become healthier and avoid growing older in poor condition. Leisure facilities are associated with more sedate pastimes and generally speaking we don't associate these activities with catching a fatal disease, but don't fool yourself!

One thing all of these facilities have in common is showers – one of the greatest hazards there is for contracting Legionnaires' disease. Go into most centres changing rooms and there will be a haze of steam which is actually aerosol, billions of tiny droplets of water that we breathe into our lungs. You don't have to take a shower to breathe in the bacteria. If the systems are clean and well maintained to prevent Legionella growth this isn't a problem.

Showers and spa pools warrant their own sections in HSE guidelines on the prevention of Legionella. Despite this, we know that many property owners are either oblivious to, or are playing hard and fast ignoring the LEGAL REQUIREMENT to protect the people using the facility. You may feel that your systems are safe but on a weekly basis we see all manner of risks lurking in places we visit and water samples test positive for the bacteria with alarming regularity.

New or old properties, Legionella does not discriminate, it's how you manage your water systems that matters. The bacteria are omnipresent in almost all manmade water systems despite utility company treatment of mains water.

THE LAW: Under Health and Safety at Work Regulations it is incumbent upon the building's owners to ensure that a Risk Assessment is undertaken, that identified risks are removed or mitigated to as low as reasonably practicable (ALARP) and that monitoring and maintenance of the systems (often more than one) is carried out routinely, robustly and logged as being done. It is common now for courts to issue fines into 6 and 7 figures where Legionnaires' cases occur, and even where there is no bacterium in the system, if it is not being managed properly. Legionella outbreaks are not only devastating for the people concerned, they can be catastrophic for businesses.

LEGIONELLOSIS: *Legionella pneumophila*, the most serious strain, "has a mortality rate between 10-12%. Those who do survive are likely to be very unwell. It is a highly debilitating disease, often leaving people deaf or blind, or with lost limbs because over the course of the illness they have gone into coma or they have suffered brain damage and it has affected their entire systems. Recovery can take 12 – 18 months. Often people do not ever recover fully due to complications" (Green, 2013).

PEACE OF MIND: An Aqua Legionella Risk Assessment will identify and assess the source of any risk, take samples for laboratory analysis and provide you with a complete 'toolkit' to prevent and/or control that risk. We help you to implement and manage the control programme and provide you with the means to keep records. More than that though, we are always here to offer guidance and answer questions - our support doesn't stop when we provide you with your bespoke report - which consists of...



1. Detailed Risk Assessment including schematics required by law
2. Management Summary Report - what you need to do in plain language
3. A Logbook based on your system
4. All of this in electronic format, plus legislation and guidance on a disc
5. A framed Certificate of Compliance **and peace of mind!**



Aqua Engineering Solutions Ltd
Unit 1 Whitefield Place, Morecambe, Lancashire, LA3 3EA
(01524) 66512 | www.aquaengineering.co.uk
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