

Nursing Homes – Legionella Control

Nursing homes must put in place measures for the control of Legionella that apply to all managed properties as follows:

- Undertake a risk assessment and ensure there is a programme for controlling Legionella in place.
- Control temperature, which is key to inhibiting the growth of Legionella - hot water must stay hot and cold water should remain cold. Temperatures should be checked in line with the risk assessment.
- Keep water in the system flowing. Stagnant water gives an opportunity for Legionella growth.
- Flush the system regularly, especially when rooms are vacant.
- Check hot and cold water tanks periodically for debris and scale and ensure that they are functioning as they should.
- Remove any redundant pipework.
- Keep records of the monitoring regime.
- Review the risk assessment regularly in case anything changes.

In addition to this, nursing home managers need to be aware that HSG 274 Part 2 states

“Healthcare buildings and care homes should specifically take note of alerts and advice from the Department of Health and Health Facilities Scotland. For example, healthcare premises are advised against the use of ethylene propylene diene monomer (EPDM) lined flexible hoses (tails) as these have been shown to be a risk of microbial colonisation. Such flexible connections should therefore only be used in healthcare premises where an installation has to move during operation or is subject to vibration”.

This means that Legionella control in nursing homes should be at the same standard as that in hospitals. This means understanding more than the HSE guidance that applies to most buildings. The Department of Health Estates and Facilities Division publishes guidance for engineering practices for the NHS in the Health Technical Memorandum series, of which one is HTM 04-01: Safe water in healthcare premises. In relation to the installation of TMVs, correct temperatures in pipework distribution and the installation of flexible hoses, as outlined above, the demands are greater than for most normal buildings.