

Legionella bacteria warning for commercial buildings and workplaces

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The current UK heatwave combined with lower holiday period building occupancy means increased risk levels for building water systems.

With the current UK heatwave expected to hit its peak next Monday as temperatures build towards 35C in parts of the UK, [IWS Water Hygiene](#) is issuing an increased legionella bacteria warning to workplace and commercial building owners and facilities managers.

The combination of rising stored water temperatures due to the heatwave and reduced usage of water in buildings due to low occupancy will increase the risk of legionella bacteria proliferation and contamination at many properties and workplaces.

Simon Rawsthorne, head of operations at IWS Water Hygiene said: "a low turnover of water throughout a building, together with stored water temperatures between 20°C and 45°C, provide the ideal conditions for legionella bacteria to grow and multiply. During this summer period we would urge commercial building owners and maintenance teams to take extra care to control the growth of legionella by reviewing the measures they currently have in place and by making sure they are suitable for the current conditions.

"Additional flushing regimes should be considered to keep the turnover of water at a reasonable level as well as ensuring cold water is stored and distributed within well-insulated tanks and pipework."

Legionnaires' disease, caused by legionella bacteria, is a severe form of pneumonia, which is an infection that causes inflammation of the small air sacs in the lungs and their tissues. The disease is severe and potentially fatal. Building managers, landlords and employers have a duty of care to the people in their buildings, and it is therefore imperative they understand the health risks associated with legionella, carry out legionella risk assessments and regularly review and manage the measures in place to minimise the



chance of someone within their buildings contracting this potentially fatal disease.

If anyone is concerned about the current higher risk levels and their compliance to managing this risk, they can contact the water hygiene experts at IWS [here](#)