

Water Hygiene in Your Home – A tenant's guide to water safety and hygiene.

Domestic hot and cold water systems can provide an environment where Legionella bacteria can grow. Legionnaires' Disease can be caused by the inhalation of small droplets of contaminated water containing Legionella bacteria. Residents of rented domestic accommodation should follow the below guidelines to minimise the risk of Legionnaires' Disease within their home.

Most importantly, make sure that

- Hot water in the system is kept hot
- Cold water is kept cold
- The water is kept circulated

In particular, it is important that you

- Tell us if the boiler or hot water tank are not working properly, particularly if the water is not coming out of the taps at a sufficiently high temperature. It should come out at a temperature of 50°C after it has run for a minute at the latest.
- Do not interfere with the settings on your boiler or hot water system. The hot water should be set so that the water is heated up to 60°C.
- Tell us if the cold water is still running warm after you have initially run off any water, which may have accumulated in the pipes. It should not be above 20°C.
- Tell us if there are problems, debris or discolouration in the water.

Where showers are fitted

- If they are used only occasionally then flush them through by running them for at least 2 minutes once a week on the hottest setting. Flushing should be carried out on each spray setting. It is preferable to have the showerhead removed from the hose to avoid dispersing the water in aerosol droplets, but if this isn't possible, remove it from the shower bracket, cover it with a towel or plastic bag and place the shower head in the base of the shower tray/bath.
- Keep out of the way of any spray/mist whilst this is being done as far as possible.

- Clean the shower head periodically, descale and disinfect it. This should be done at least every 3 months.

Going on Holiday & Vacant Periods

- Turning on taps in basins and baths and flushing the toilets is the most effective. Run water from both hot and cold supplies for 5 minutes. If on a single mixer tap, turn the tap on to its hottest setting run water on hottest through tap for 5 minutes. Then turn the tap on to cold only and run water through tap for a further 5 minutes. The water should be run slowly to avoid spray for 1st minute and can then be run faster for a further 4 minutes.
- To wash through the shower head, put the shower head down in the bath or shower tray to avoid too many water droplets in the air and flush through as detailed above.
- The hot water should be set and maintained above 45°C to prevent breeding in the hot water tank. This means that each time the water is heated, it should be making it hard from them to breed. Raising the temperature of your hot water system to 60°C for a 1 hour period and flushing of HW tap outlets will ensure that any bacteria will be killed off.
- Run water through infrequently used outlets. For example, if you have any secondary WC/bathroom that is not used very often, then ensure you run water through both taps on the wash hand basin and the toilet and shower periodically and certainly before anyone might be using those facilities.

'WARNING' Please be aware of scalding risk when carrying out flushing on any hot water outlet. It is essential that the outlet is not left unoccupied during the flushing period.

If you are in any doubt about any of the above guidance, please contact your housing officer housing.officer@cambridge.gov.uk