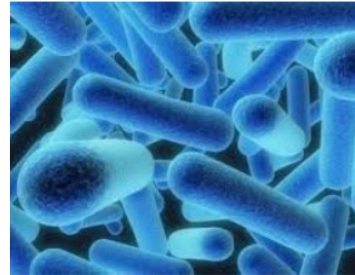


## Landlord Factsheet: Legionnaires Disease

### What Is It?

Legionella is a bacterial infection. It is a form of pneumonia. It is NOT a virus. It is found in rivers, lakes and reservoirs but rarely in numbers sufficient to cause infection. In buildings it is commonly found in stagnant water (cooling towers, hot and cold water systems, spa pools etc). The bacteria has a life expectancy of 72 hours but can double in twelve hours if the conditions are right. This would lead to an outbreak within ten days.



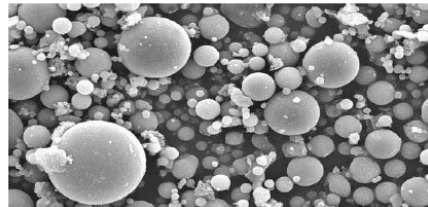
### What Are The Right Conditions?

Water temperatures above 20C and below 60C but peaking at 37C are perfect for the bacteria to multiply. This is the temperature most people have their baths and showers. It also needs "food" in the form of organic matter, i.e. us! Other forms of organic matter are rusty corroded pipes, sediment, sludge, limescale, rubber pipes, wood and slime (often found in stagnant or slow flowing water).



### How Is It Caught?

By inhaling small droplets of water (aerosols) suspended in the air which contain the bacteria. This can come from showers, taps, jacuzzis, spa pools etc.



### What Are The Symptoms?

Symptoms are similar to pneumonia with high fever, chills, headache and muscle pain. Legionnaires Disease is often misdiagnosed as pneumonia. Other symptoms can be a dry cough, difficulty with breathing, diarrhoea or vomiting, with about half of all patients becoming confused and delirious. It is treated with antibiotics and full recovery may take up to a year. The incubation period is 10-14 days so someone affected needs to work out where they were up to two weeks previously to identify how they have become infected.

### Are There Any High Risk Groups?

Yes. Men are more susceptible than women, although no-one knows why. Also, anyone over 45 years old, smokers, the immunosuppressed, heavy drinkers, diabetics, the chronically ill and new born babies.

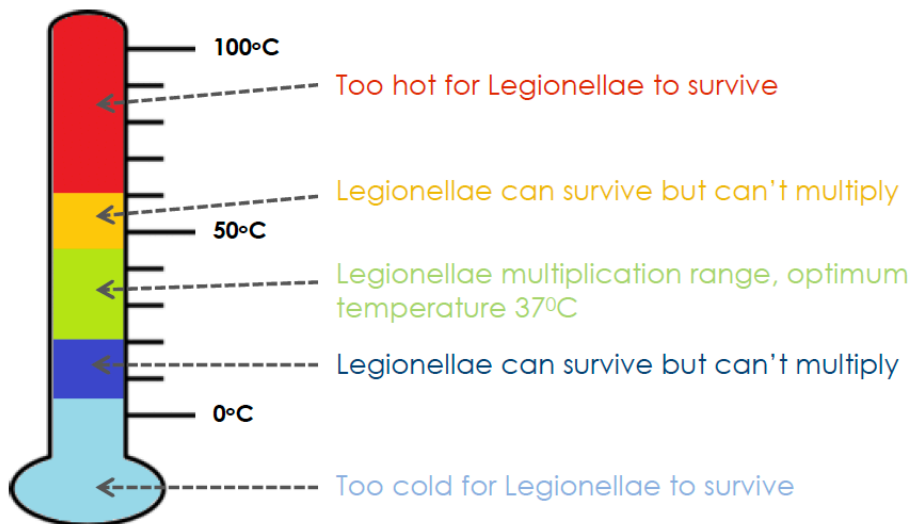


## How Can It Be Prevented?

Turn the hot water temperature up to 60°C. This will kill the bacteria. Tenants may be reluctant to do this from a cost perspective. The cold water outlet should be below 20 degrees which will also kill the bacteria.

Any taps, toilets, baths, showers etc that are not in regular use should be turned on/flushed at least once a week to keep the water flowing through the system. Water tanks should have the correct lid on them and be checked to make sure there is nothing nasty lurking in the water (cases of dead birds, insects and even a snake have been reported!).

Any jacuzzis built into the bath should ideally be taken out. Unless they are used very regularly (several times a week) they are one of the worst offenders. Home spa pools are also not advisable. (It should be pointed out that jacuzzis and spa pools in public places have to adhere to very strict regulations with regards to cleaning and prevention of legionnaires diseases which home systems do not)



## In A Rented Property, Who Is Ultimately Responsible?

The owner of the property is ultimately responsible.

## How Serious Is It?

Very. About 10% - 15% of sufferers die from the disease.

