

How to look after the water in your new home

Domestic properties are at low risk of problems caused by legionella bacteria, but there are simple steps recommended that can be taken to reduce that risk even further.

What is legionella?

Legionella is a bacterium which naturally occurs in water sources such as ponds and lakes. This can also live in buildings water system where conditions are compatible with its growth. When allowed to grow in large numbers, the bacteria can cause illnesses such as Legionnaire's disease which is a serious lung infection. Although anyone can contract legionnaires disease some people are at higher risk e.g. people over 45, smokers and heavy drinkers, and people with underlying health conditions.

When I get my keys

believe housing recommend that the water in the property is not used until the Turn on and Test is completed. During this process the water system will also be flushed though to ensure that is it safe and ready to use.

If you must use the water before the Turn on and Test, make sure that all the taps and showers in the property are run gently for 10 minutes to remove any stagnant water before the system is used. When running a shower, the head should be removed, or a bin bag should be placed over it to protect against any spray created.

When I move in

How we use the water in our home can affect water quality and even encourage bacterial growth.

Simple steps to reduce risk

- Make sure that taps and showers are regularly cleaned and kept free of debris and scale. Make sure that every water outlet that isn't used on a weekly basis is opened and flushed through to ensure all the water in the building is kept moving. This includes all taps (including outside taps), showers, and toilets.
- When returning from extended periods away from the home, make sure that all taps are run for several minutes.
- If you notice ant debris or discoloration coming through the taps and showers report this to believe housing on 0300 1311 999.

In Hot Water

- Don't reduce your hot water temperature from the pre-set level. Keeping hot water at between 50C and 60C will kill any bacteria which may enter the system.
- If you notice the hot water temperature drop unexpectedly report it to believe housing immediately on 0300 1311 999.

Tap hygiene

- Legionella bacteria can't grow in water below 20C, so it is important that your cold-water supply is kept cold.
- If you have a bidet toilet, switch it off at the wall if you intend to be away from the property for more than one week. This is so warm water is not left in the cistern.
- If you notice the cold water coming through your taps is warm report it to believe housing on 0300 1311 999.

Other fittings and appliances

- If you have an outside tap fitted, the installation must comply with the water supply regulations and have a backflow prevention device, usually a double check valve
- Any appliances you buy that are connected to the water supply must comply with water regulations
- All domestic appliances, such as washing machines and dishwashers comply to the appropriate standards but many commercial appliances do not, and are not suitable for home use.