

# Community Safety and Wellbeing

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AshfordBoroughCouncil

The Manager

Our ref:  
Date: 12th May 2020

Dear Manager

## ***Legionella* risks in vacant properties**

During the Covid-19 pandemic and current state of emergency, businesses have closed and buildings and properties have become vacant, for a period of time sufficient to increase the risk of Legionella in water systems.

This information is for the attention of business owners or operators, landlords or property managers and anyone who manages water systems in properties.

As we know the Government is currently advising home working, therefore it is timely to remind you of the *Legionella* risks in vacant properties, including the businesses that have temporarily closed, where water is allowed to stagnate within water systems.

As a general principle, outlets on hot and cold water systems should be used at least once a week to maintain a degree of water flow and to minimise the chances of stagnation.

To manage the risks during non-occupancy, consideration should be given to implementing a suitable flushing regime or other measures such as draining the system if it is to remain vacant for long periods (see <https://www.hse.gov.uk/legionnaires/legionella-landlords-responsibilities.htm>).

This guidance also applies to workplaces which become less occupied (such as out-patient wards).

In addition, consideration is required of other water systems that are no longer in use, such as leisure, sports and swimming and spa pool facilities.

We suggest that for these facilities, you should follow the procedures described in the Pool Water Treatment Advisory Group Code of Practice and this can be found at <https://www.pwtag.org/code-of-practice/>.



Guidance has also been produced by the European Society for Clinical Microbiology and Infectious disease on managing *Legionella* in building water systems during the COVID-19 pandemic.

[https://www.escmid.org/fileadmin/src/media/PDFs/3Research\\_Projects/ESGLI/COVID\\_building\\_water\\_system\\_guidance\\_27\\_3\\_20\\_v4\\_DS.pdf](https://www.escmid.org/fileadmin/src/media/PDFs/3Research_Projects/ESGLI/COVID_building_water_system_guidance_27_3_20_v4_DS.pdf)

Yours faithfully

Team Leader  
Environmental Health