



Preventing Legionnaires' Disease **in Hotels**

Protect Your Guests Through Effective Water Management

Legionnaires' disease is a serious form of pneumonia caused by Legionella bacteria that can grow in building water systems. Hotels are considered higher-risk facilities because of their complex plumbing systems, varying occupancy levels, hot tubs, cooling towers, decorative fountains, and guest room showers.

The most effective way to reduce this risk is by implementing and maintaining a comprehensive Water Management Program (WMP) that aligns with CDC guidance and ASHRAE Standard 188.

Establish a Water Management Program

A documented Water Management Program is the foundation of Legionella prevention.

YOUR PROGRAM SHOULD:

- + Include representatives from engineering, operations, housekeeping, risk management, and qualified water treatment vendors.
- + Map all building water systems.
- + Identify locations where Legionella could grow or spread.
- + Establish monitoring procedures, control measures, corrective actions, and documentation requirements.

Control Water Temperatures

Temperature management is one of the most effective ways to discourage Legionella growth.

BEST PRACTICES INCLUDE:

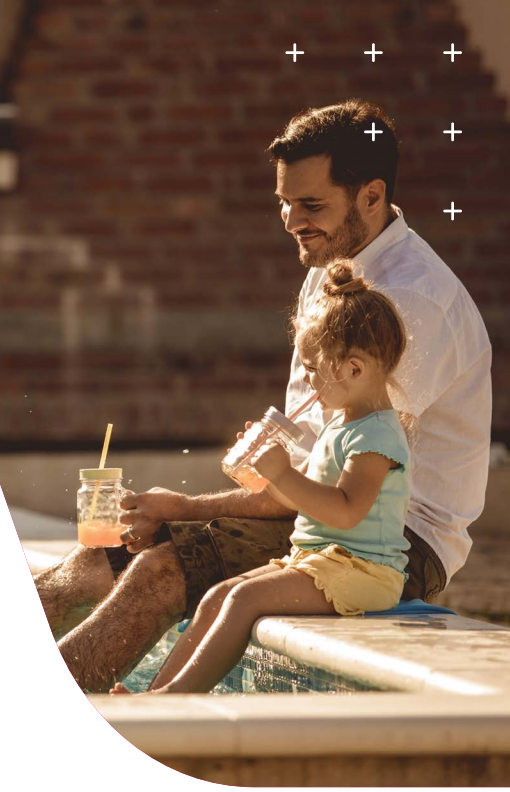
- + Maintain hot water temperatures high enough to inhibit bacterial growth.
- + Prevent warm-water stagnation in piping and storage tanks.
- + Routinely verify temperatures at representative outlets throughout the property.

Maintain Proper Disinfectant Levels

Water entering the building should maintain adequate disinfectant residuals throughout the distribution system.

STAFF SHOULD:

- + Monitor incoming municipal water quality.
- + Verify disinfectant residuals at key locations.
- + Investigate and correct areas with inadequate disinfectant levels promptly.





Reduce Water Stagnation

Stagnant water creates favorable conditions for bacterial growth.

DEVELOP FLUSHING PROCEDURES FOR:

- + Vacant guest rooms
- + Closed floors or wings
- + Seasonal facilities
- + Low-use plumbing fixtures

Following periods of low occupancy, flush affected systems thoroughly before returning rooms or facilities to service.

Closely Manage High-Risk Water Features

Certain systems require increased attention because they can generate contaminated water droplets.

THESE INCLUDE:

- + Cooling towers
- + Hot tubs and spas
- + Decorative fountains
- + Water features
- + Misters and other aerosol-generating devices

Follow scheduled cleaning, maintenance, disinfection, and inspection procedures, and maintain complete service records.

Monitor and Document

Routine monitoring helps verify that your Water Management Program is working effectively.

TRACK:

- + Water temperatures
- + Disinfectant levels
- + Flushing activities
- + Preventive maintenance
- + Corrective actions

Maintain organized records to demonstrate compliance and support investigations if issues arise.

Prepare for Water System Disruptions

Events that disturb the water system can increase Legionella risk.

DEVELOP RESPONSE PROCEDURES FOR:

- + Water main breaks
- + Construction or renovation projects
- + Extended building shutdowns
- + Equipment failures
- + Loss of disinfectant residual

These situations often require additional flushing, disinfection, monitoring, and documentation before returning systems to normal operation.

Train Your Team

ENGINEERING AND MAINTENANCE PERSONNEL SHOULD UNDERSTAND:

- + Legionella risks
- + Water Management Program requirements
- + Monitoring procedures
- + Documentation expectations
- + Corrective actions
- + Emergency response procedures

Regular training helps ensure the program is implemented consistently.

Validate Your Program

While routine Legionella testing is not always required, many hotels include periodic testing as part of their overall validation process.

Testing should complement, not replace, a comprehensive Water Management Program and sound maintenance practices.

RISK CONTROL TIP

A documented, well-maintained Water Management Program is one of the strongest defenses against Legionella-related claims. Regular monitoring, complete documentation, vendor oversight, and annual program reviews help demonstrate due diligence while protecting guests and employees.

Key Takeaway

Preventing Legionnaires' disease requires proactive water system management; not reactive testing after a problem occurs. By implementing a comprehensive Water Management Program, monitoring critical control points, reducing water stagnation, and maintaining accurate records, hotels can significantly reduce the risk of Legionella growth while protecting guests, employees, and their reputation.



This material is for general information only and should not be considered as a substitute for legal, medical, tax and/or actuarial advice. Contact the appropriate professional counsel for such matters. These materials are not exhaustive and are subject to possible changes in applicable laws, rules, and regulations and their interpretations.

NPN 1316541 | IMA, Inc dba IMA Insurance Services
California Lic #0H64724 | CT-IMA-F-H-RC-072126

©IMA Financial Group, Inc. 2026

IMACORP.COM