

## Water Hygiene/Treatment Guidance - for periods of unusual low building use

The Government has not stated any special measures to exempt Responsible person/s from the 'Health and Safety at Work Act 1974', under which statutory requirements of ACOP L8 & HSG274 guidance fall. Therefore, continuation of normal water hygiene and treatment works should be maintained, in line with when they are next due. For example, monthly temperature monitoring, quarterly showerhead descaling, 6 monthly tank inspections, annual calorifier blowdowns etc. Our governing body, the LCA, have produced the following article to explain the current position <https://www.legionellacontrol.org.uk/news/87/>.

If a building is closed or access restricted, a reduced footfall will result in any water system/s usage being much lower than normal operating conditions. In addition, you need to factor in reduced capacity from onsite maintenance teams, implementing split shifts to ensure continuity. So, consideration should be taken to change the water hygiene & treatment regime to suit. We have highlighted typical items to consider when assessing water system risk in your building/s:

- **Increased flushing** - With reduced water usage it is essential that the little used outlets (HWS and CWS) register is reviewed and updated. Any outlets that are little used should go on to the weekly flushing regime and recorded in the site logbook. Depending on the extent of the closure, this may include all outlets on site. There is no specific time limit for this flushing however the water should be flushed until the temperature of the water reaches within 2 degrees of the temperature of the incoming mains water. E.g. if the nearest mains outlet to the mains is 10°C the other outlets should be flushed until they reach 12°C or below. We would suggest a minimum of 2 minutes per outlet to be sufficient in most cases.

As an extra precautionary measure, to check that your increased flushing has been effective, you may want to consider extra microbiological sampling from these buildings with reduced water usage.

- **Cold Water Storage Tanks** – HSG 274 guidance states that tanks should be turned over (water within them used up) every 24 hours to prevent stagnation from occurring. Any site with a tank should increase flushing of tank fed outlets (can see these from the risk assessment schematics), ideally to daily to help turn them over within 24hours, but at least weekly to help keep the system water moving. If possible, the tank capacity should also be reduced. If a delayed action ball-valve is fitted, we can advise you on how to lower these to reduce tank capacity or can provide you with a cost for installing these.

If there is a possibility of bypassing the tank or reducing the number of tanks in use, this should be considered to reduce the amount of stored water on site. Please note, if a tank is isolated for a period of time it should be drained or left full (and clearly labelled) but then chlorinated before it is reinstated.

- **Water Heaters**- If the hot water is not required in the building you could turn the water heater off without a water hygiene issue, as long as the water is stored at less than 20°C (like your cold water). It can then be managed in a similar way to a cold water tank, with outlets fed by it flushed daily or as frequently as possible. We would recommend that when the unit is reinstated that a pasteurisation is carried out prior to service resuming. This involves turning up the water heater to store the water as hot as possible (60°C+ ) for at least an hour, before flushing through to all outlets fed by it.



- **Cooling Towers-** if the building does not require the cooling tower system/s during the closure period this can be shut down, however we would only recommend this in the case of a full lockdown, where it would be impossible to access site to carry out maintenance (and valves are known to hold). Again, as with the cold water storage tanks (CWSTs), it is essential that if this is carried out the towers will need to be cleaned and disinfected prior to being returned to service.

It is particularly important that you continue to maintain your daily and weekly testing /tasks during the period. Dipslides, TVC and Legionella sampling should continue at the usual frequencies.

- **Water Softener-** the salt level in the brine tank should be checked regularly and topped up if required. It is likely that the amount of softened water required will be less than usual, so salt levels won't drop very quickly but should be checked regularly.
- **Closed systems-** BMS/manual valve exercising for these systems should be continued as normal to ensure circulation is occurring. If you have a remote monitoring system installed (e.g. Hevasure) on your closed system/s it is important that you continue to monitor this and regularly check in with your specialist/account manager to ensure the systems are being maintained well.

If you require any guidance or assistance from Guardian during this period, additional visits, enhanced sampling protocols, disinfection works etc, please get in touch with one of the team. We are here to support and keep you compliant throughout these extraordinary times.

