



## Reduce risk of Legionnaires' disease on your properties

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Reports of deaths in the South Bronx due to an outbreak of Legionnaires' disease are a reminder that it's important for property managers to refresh their knowledge on how to prevent an outbreak and respond if one occurs.

Legionnaires' disease is a potentially fatal form of pneumonia contracted by inhaling tiny droplets of water containing the Legionella bacteria. There are an estimated 8,000 to 18,000 hospitalized cases of Legionnaires' disease in the United States each year. Taken from the IREM Real Estate Manager's Checklist: Legionnaire's Disease, here are some steps you can take to keep your properties safe.

### 1. Assess risk:

- \* Look for water conditions that encourage the growth of Legionella, like stagnant water and algae.
- \* Review your maintenance records on water systems.
- \* Note the location of fresh-air intakes relative to water sources.
- \* Identify occurrences of stagnant water, like storage tanks, unused plumbing pipe sections, or infrequently used faucets.
- \* Check for cross-connections between domestic and process water systems and note the presence and condition of back-flow prevention devices.

### 2. Prevent and mitigate:

- \* Avoid or remove equipment that produces mists or sprays.
- \* Avoid dead-ends or stagnant corners in pipework.
- \* Design holding tanks for easy cleaning and draining.
- \* Maintain maintenance records and review them frequently.
- \* Clean, inspect, and disinfect HVAC regularly.
- \* Maintain domestic water heaters at 140F.
- \* Drain and clean whirlpools and filters regularly.

### 3. Communicate with tenants and residents:

- \* Educate residents/tenants on Legionnaires' disease, including potential symptoms and what to do if they think they are infected.
- \* Advise residents/tenants about the assessment and prevention measures you are taking.
- \* Notify residents/tenants if there is an outbreak.
- \* Warn residents/tenants about the risk of burns/scalding if you are raising water temperature.

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