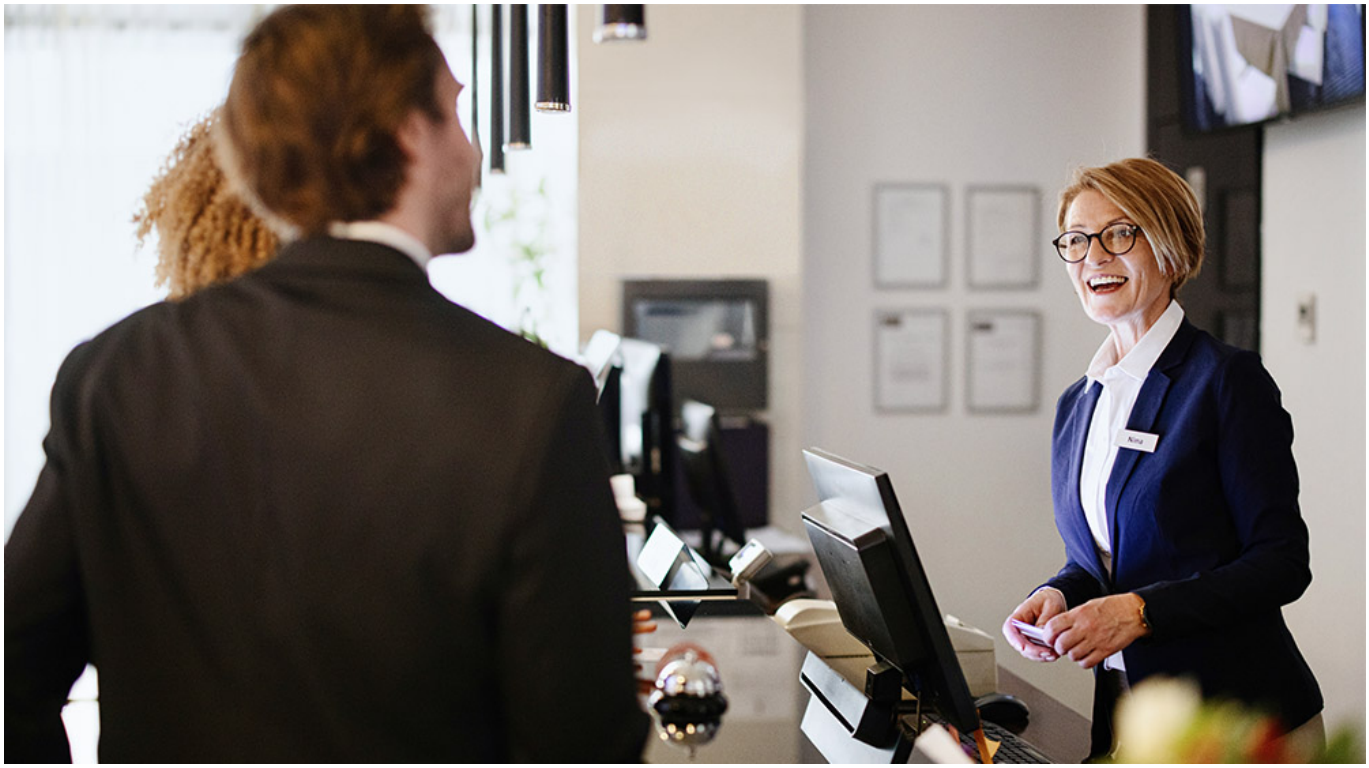
How to prevent legionnaires’ disease in hotels and resorts.



If you own or manage a hospitality business, you know how important it is to ensure your guests’ health and safety. But, it’s equally important that you do the same for your employees, as maintaining a healthy workforce can help your business run smoothly. So, let’s talk about your health and safety plans. Do they include a water management program that helps prevent legionnaires’ disease? (Hint: If they don’t, they should.)

To learn how to prevent legionnaires’ disease in hotels and resorts, read on.

What is legionnaires’ disease?

Legionnaires’ disease is a serious type of pneumonia (lung infection) caused by Legionella bacteria. In nature, Legionellae live in fresh water, but they rarely impact individuals. In man-made settings, however, they can grow if water sources aren’t well maintained – infecting individuals who inhale microscopic water droplets that contain the bacteria.

How prevalent is legionnaires’ disease?

Legionnaires’ disease is on the rise. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), rates have increased nine-fold since the year 2000, and hotels and resorts are frequent outbreak settings.

Where are the problem areas in hotels and resorts?

The Legionella bacteria can grow and spread in many areas of hotels and resorts, but it's often found in warm water that's either not moving or doesn't have enough disinfectant. Per the CDC, this includes:

- **Showers:** Legionella can grow in and spread through showerheads if a building's water has low disinfectant levels.
- **Hot tubs:** Warm temperatures support the growth of Legionella, which can spread through water jets if hot tubs aren't well maintained with proper cleanings and filter replacements.
- **Decorative fountains:** Legionella can grow in warm areas of a fountain, and splashing can spread water containing the bacteria.
- **Cooling towers:** When disinfectant levels are low, cooling tower fans can spray water containing Legionella.
- **Unoccupied rooms or floors:** Low occupancy decreases water flow, which can decrease disinfectant levels and increase the risk of Legionella growth.
- **Water supply interruptions:** Events that interrupt the delivery of municipal water to a building, such as nearby construction, can allow dirt to enter the system and use up disinfectant.

How can hotels and resorts prevent legionnaires' disease?

With an effective water management program, now an industry standard for large buildings in the United States, preventing legionnaires' disease and protecting your employees and guests is possible. And to make implementation as easy as possible, the CDC has developed a free toolkit with practical guidance to help hotel and resort owners and managers identify areas where Legionellae could grow and spread, reduce the risk, and trigger action when risks are identified.

For more on how to prevent legionnaires' disease, the CDC encourages those in the hotel and resort industry to read up on the problem and prevention, or get assistance at a local level. We also suggest reviewing your commercial coverage with a local, independent agent. Bonus: Ask if you could benefit from our safety services program.