

Legionella

As a Landlord, you have certain obligations to make sure the water in your rental property is safe. One of these obligations is there to prevent the growth of legionella within your property's water system.

What is Legionella?

Legionella is a waterborne bacterium. Legionnaires' disease is a potentially fatal form of pneumonia caused by inhaling small droplets of water containing legionella.

What to you need to do?

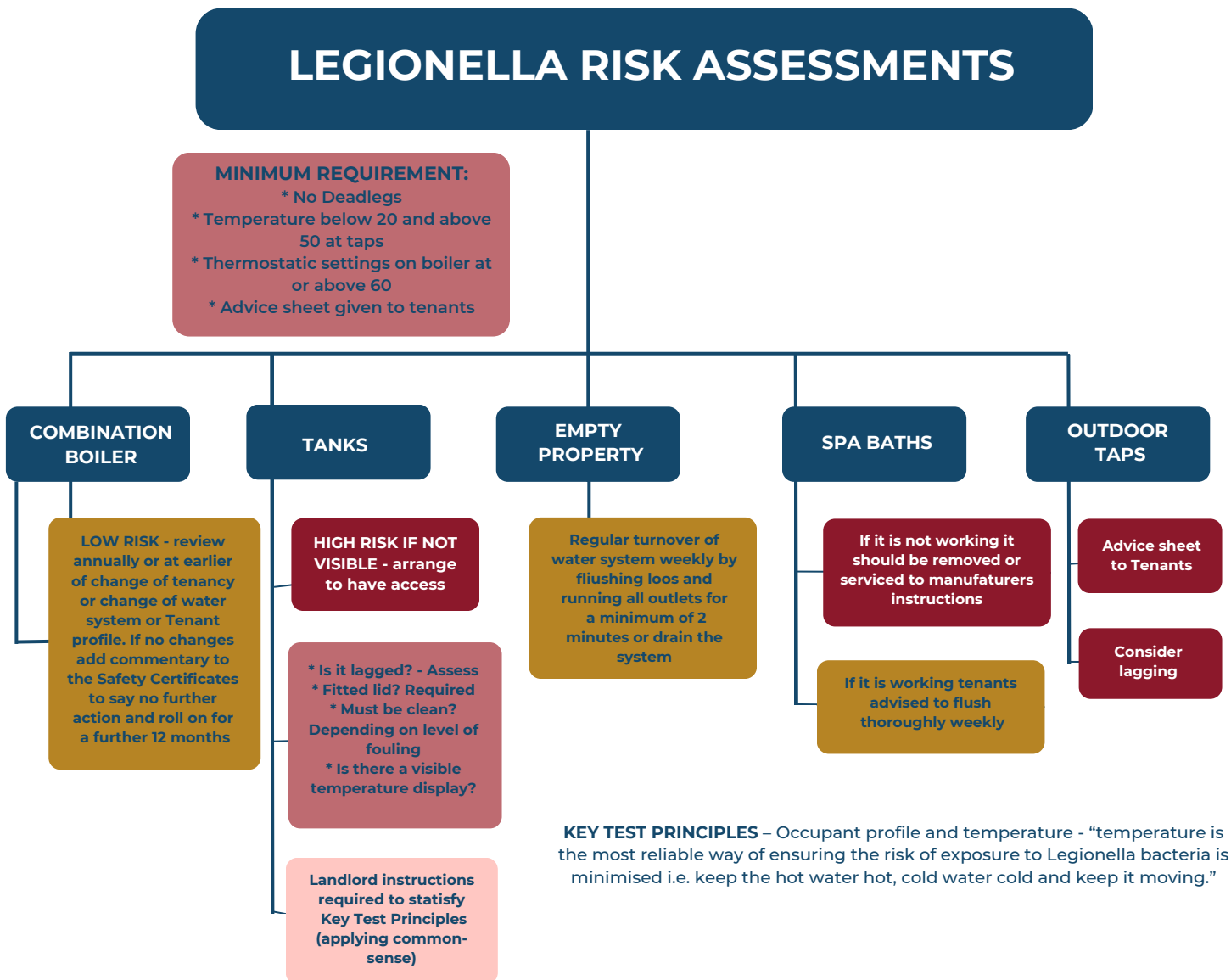
The Health and Safety Executive states that Landlords must assess the risk of legionella in their property's water system. This **Legionella Risk Assessment (LRA)** must be carried out by a "competent person" (someone with the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to manage health and safety, including control measures) and any measures recommended must be actioned.

We make sure that any LRA is conducted by one of our qualified third-party contractors, is formally documented in a written report and is reinstructed periodically (typically every 2-3 years or after major plumbing works).

We provide an advice sheet to your Tenants and conduct risk monitoring during our inspections.

Note that an LRA is not like a GSC or PAT – **there is no PASS or FAIL**. It is about assessing risk and carrying out ongoing monitoring and control measures. We have produced the flowchart below to help explain the process.

We have put together a handy decision tree to help you understand a Reports' possible findings:



Where are the risks?

Some water systems are more attractive to legionella than others. All water systems should be able to produce cold water at less than 20 degrees celsius and hot water at over 60 degrees celsius, but some may have weaknesses within them.

Areas of water systems with lukewarm and/or stagnant water are most at risk. The LRA will typically flag these.

High risk scenarios and areas of a system include:

- **Empty properties:**

We make sure all toilets are flushed and all water outlets (hot and cold) are run for two minutes when your property has been void prior to a let. We give the same advice to tenants following holidays.

- **Cold/hot water storage tanks:**

These must be clean, properly insulated and have a tight-fitting lid to prevent debris getting into the system.

- **Showers and jacuzzi baths:**

These are high risk if not used regularly and mould builds up on the showerhead/jets. We regularly advise tenants to clean showerhead and jacuzzi baths. Jacuzzi baths should also be serviced regularly.

- **Redundant pipework (also known as “dead legs”):**

These are often a result of substantial plumbing works (such as a new heating system or moving a bathroom) and should be removed.

What if I don't comply?

If you fail to follow the Health & Safety Executive's advice and refuse to conduct an LRA, you could be subject to a hefty fine and/or imprisonment.

Information correct as of May 2024.

We hope you have found this helpful. If you have any questions or would like to speak to a member of our team, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

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