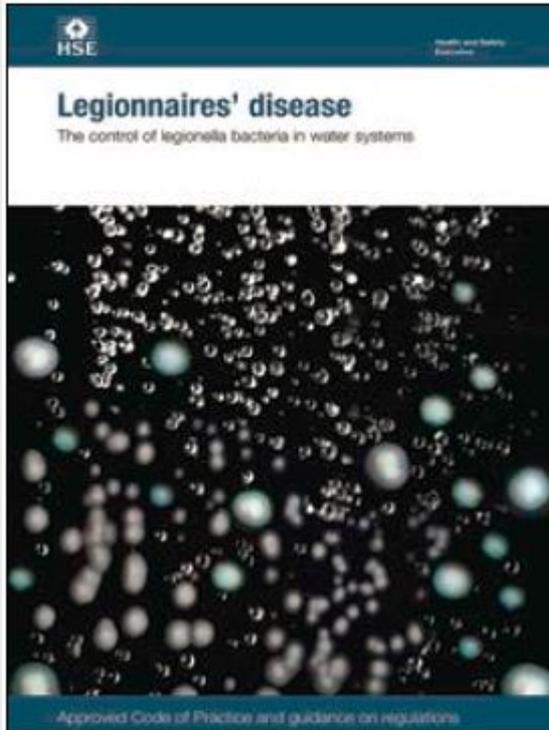


## Legionella control made easier: HSE release new Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) Legionnaires Disease: The control of Legionella bacteria in water systems (L8)

On the 25<sup>th</sup> November 2013, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) released version 4 of the Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) “*Legionnaires’ Disease: The control of Legionella bacteria in water systems (L8)*”. The ACOP, along with supporting Technical Guidance, provides practical advice to employers on how to control the risk of legionella bacteria in water systems. CEM Water Hygiene explain the key differences between the new ACOP and the previous version and explore how this will impact on companies; large and small.



The control of Legionella has been a priority of the HSE and Department of Health for many years now, although outbreaks of Legionnaires’ disease continue to dominate headlines. This year alone we have seen outbreaks across the country from Edinburgh to London; infecting individuals in our schools, hospitals and office blocks. With a high fatality rate of approximately 15%, Legionnaires’ disease remains a major concern for the HSE as it is a controllable disease and, through guidance and education, all employers can control the risks and prevent this disease from killing further.

In an attempt to provide more detailed guidance for employers in preventing Legionnaires’ disease, the HSE has significantly revised the ACOP L8.

The revised version sees a clearer distinction between the legal requirements and guidance, with the introduction of separate Technical Guidance document (HSG 274). Employers have previously found it difficult to distinguish between requirements that have ACOP status and information that is purely for guidance. This separation should help to provide better clarity for employers.

Martin Buckley of CEM Water Hygiene, praised the new ACOP and supporting technical guidance, claiming that “the level of guidance provided in the technical guidance documents is exceptional. The

documents are well written with some clear practical guidance and specific visual examples of good, acceptable and poor practice.”

Further Martin considers “the onus is now clearly on the Duty Holder for making key decisions about the frequency and necessity for risk assessments. This means that the Duty Holder must have the knowledge, understanding and competency to make these decisions and training for Duty Holders, and their Responsible Persons, now becomes more crucial than ever before.” Martin went on to say that the revised ACOP places more responsibility on the owners of micro organisations, with 5 or less employees, for example shop holders, who now need to make important decisions for themselves as to whether a risk assessment is necessary in the first place.

The changes included within the revised ACOP and supporting Technical Guidance documents may not be dramatic but there are subtle differences that Duty Holders need to be aware of. No matter how large or small the organisation, the HSE ACOP is a document that duty holders must be compliant with. CEM Water Hygiene welcomes the introduction of separate guidance documents and the revisions that have been made to the ACOP and believes that this clarity will help employers to better meet their requirements under the Approved Code of Practice.

### **Download a FREE copy of the new AcoP and L8 Guidance**

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l8.htm>

### **HSG274 Technical Guidance**

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg274.htm>

### **HSG274 Part 1 - Cooling Water guidance**

Part 1: [The control of legionella bacteria in evaporative cooling systems](#)

### **HSG274 Part 2 - Hot and Cold Water Systems (interim guidance)**

Part 2: [The control of legionella bacteria in hot and cold water systems - Interim guidance](#)

Part 2 (HCWS) is an extract of the old L8 guidance which is published as an interim document until the new document is finished. Once the HCWS section is finalised, this will be published online and the hard copy produced comprising the three sections.

### **HSG274 Part 3 - Other Miscellaneous Systems guidance**

Part 3: [The control of legionella bacteria in other risk systems](#)