



NEW CDC VITAL SIGNS REPORT ON LEGIONNAIRES' DISEASE

On June 6th, 2017, CDC released its latest Vital Signs report which focuses on how Legionnaires' disease affects the healthcare system and how a comprehensive water treatment and management program is the most effective method of prevention. (<https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/legionella/>)

As part of this report, CDC has also unveiled its new standards toolkit, "Developing a Water Management Program to Reduce Legionella Growth and Spread in Buildings: A Practical Guide." One of the changes to this guide is that now the CDC recommends contacting a water treatment professional to develop a Water Management Program to effectively prevent or eliminate legionella. (<https://www.cdc.gov/legionella/downloads/toolkit.pdf>)

In addition, CMS (Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services) issued S&C 17-30-Hospitals/CAHs/NHs with a requirement to develop a Water Management Program to reduce Legionella risk in healthcare facility water systems. This memorandum is effective immediately and is intended to prevent cases of Legionnaires' Disease. The summary of the memorandum is below.

Preventing the first case

A Legionella water management program routinely consists of:

- 1 Establishing a water management program team.
2 Describing the building water systems using words and diagrams.
3 Identifying areas where Legionella could grow and spread.
4 Deciding where control measures should be applied and how to monitor them.
5 Establishing ways to intervene when control limits are not met.
6 Making sure the program is running as designed and is effective.
7 Documenting and communicating all the activities.

www.cdc.gov/legionella/WMPtoolkit

- Legionella Infections: The bacterium Legionella can cause a serious type of pneumonia called LD in persons at risk. Those at risk include persons who are at least 50 years old, smokers, or those with underlying medical conditions such as chronic lung disease or immunosuppression. Outbreaks have been linked to poorly maintained water systems in buildings with large or complex water systems including hospitals and long-term care facilities. Transmission can occur via aerosols from devices such as showerheads, cooling towers, hot tubs, and decorative fountains.
Facility Requirements to Prevent Legionella Infections: Facilities must develop and adhere to policies and procedures that inhibit microbial growth in building water systems that reduce the risk of growth and spread of legionella and other opportunistic pathogens in water.
This policy memorandum applies to Hospitals, Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs) and Long-Term Care (LTC). However, this policy memorandum is also intended to provide general awareness for all healthcare organizations.



Innovative Solutions Provider

As founding members of the Association of Water Technologies (AWT) and early adopters of ASHRAE 188, Premier Water & Energy Technology, Inc. has had a Water Management Team in place since 2009. Once a Water Management Program has been adopted and has identified the control measures needed at a facility, Premier will be able to facilitate execution of the control measures and provide third-party testing of waterborne pathogens.

The core Premier Water Management Team will consist of a Project Manager, an Association of Water Technologies Certified Water Technologist (CWT), lead Biologist and Chemical Engineer. Additional personnel can be added to the team as necessary.

Premier can support your facility’s compliance with the CMS directive in several ways including:

Option 1 – Premier will provide access and training to a web-based Water Management Program. Facility personnel will gather and upload water system data that will become the basis for the Program documents.

Option 2 – Premier will provide access and training to a web-based Water Management Program and a day of onsite water system survey training. Facility personnel will gather and upload the remaining water system data that will become the basis for the Program documents.

Option 3 – Premier will provide access and training to a web-based Water Management Program. Premier’s Water Management Team will perform the survey of the facility and upload data into the Water Management Program.

At the conclusion of Program development, Premier will provide a proposal for implementation of the control measures called for in the Water Management Program.

The following diagram is an excerpt from the CDC Toolkit:

“Control Measures and Corrective Actions: The Basics The diagram below shows the process of implementing and monitoring control measures. If you find that a control limit (i.e., temperature levels, disinfectant levels) is not being met, you need to take corrective actions to get conditions back to within an acceptable range. The right side, in yellow, illustrates the routine process of monitoring control measures to make sure they are within limits. The left side, in orange, shows the process of what to do if control measures are found to be outside of their limits.”

