

**Water hygiene**

**What do you mean by water hygiene?**

Poplar HARCA has a legal duty to make sure that the water in your home is safe and to take steps to reduce the risk of legionella

**What is Legionella?**

Legionella is a common bacteria that naturally occurs in water. Problems might arise if there is too much Legionella bacteria in water, especially if the water source makes a mist or a spray (e.g. a shower) and the droplets are inhaled.

**Is Legionella dangerous?**

It can be if the bacteria is able to grow and multiply. If somebody inhales the bacteria it can lead to Legionnaires’ disease, a severe pneumonia like disease, and other respiratory illnesses.

**Who is most at risk?**

Legionella bacteria can pose a risk to anybody but older people, those with underlying medical problems, and smokers are most susceptible.

**Where is Legionella most likely to grow?**

It is most likely to grow in places where water doesn’t move very often such as in old pipework or tanks, especially when the temperature of stored water is between 20°c to 45°c and nutrients, e.g. algae or sediment, are present.

**How do you make sure that the water in my building is clean and safe?**

We risk assess all our buildings and follow plans to keep water systems safe. We remove pipework that is no longer needed and make sure that water is stored at the right temperature.

In buildings where homes are supplied with water from shared roof tanks, our contractors test and inspect tanks every six months and thoroughly disinfect them every year.

**What about in my home?**

To complement the inspection and treatment of the tanks, we test the water in 10% of homes. Our engineers also check the hot water cylinder temperature when they service your boiler.

**Who will carry out the testing?**

Our approved contractor HSL Ltd. The operatives are suitably qualified and will carry identification. If you have any concerns about whether or not an operative is genuine, call us on 0800 035 1991.

**How do I book an appointment?**

We do not book appointments for these visits, our operatives will ask you to allow them to carry out the sampling when they are in the building.

**Will somebody need to be at home?**

Yes. Somebody over the age of 18 will need to be at home while the visit takes place.

**How long will the sampling take?**

In most cases the will take only a few minutes.

**What will the operative do during the visit?**

They will fill sample bottles with water from your taps. These will be set to a laboratory for testing.

**What will happen if a problem is found?**

If your home’s results are outside normal range, we will inform you and carry out further investigations.

**What should I do to keep the water in my home healthy?**

* If you are away from home for a week or more, flush the system on your return.
* To flush a system you should:
  1. turn on your taps and shower
  2. quickly leave the room and shut the door
  3. allow the water to run for 15 minutes
  4. turn the outlets off
  5. leave the room and shut the door again
  6. allow 20 minutes for vapour to disperse
* Clean and descale taps and shower heads regularly
* Tell us before making any plumbing changes