

BERNÍCIA



Water Hygiene

Information and advice

Water Hygiene Information

This leaflet is aimed to provide our tenants with practical advice to help prevent bacterial growth and contamination of the water supply in your home. Legionella and related bacteria is common in natural water sources such as rivers, lakes and reservoirs, but usually in low numbers. Since legionella bacteria is widespread in the environment, they may also contaminate and grow in purpose-built water systems such as hot and cold water systems.

It is important that the water supply in your home is looked after properly and whilst the majority of homes are considered to be low risk, there are some simple steps that can be taken to reduce the risk even further.

Hot & Cold Water Systems

- If you have a domestic hot water cylinder the thermostat should be set at 60°C, do not reduce this setting or the setting of your boiler thermostat, as bacteria can multiply at lower temperatures.
- If you have a combination boiler or multi-point water heater do not reduce the hot water thermostat.
- If you are away from home for a long period (e.g. holidays or hospital stays) the water can deteriorate if unused. When you return home, heat up your system to the normal temperature, open each tap and run for at least 5 minutes. Cold taps should be flushed until the water runs cold. WC's should be flushed with the lid down.
- When flushing taps and other outlets, open slowly and take care not to cause splashing or release of spray droplets into the atmosphere.





Commercial Boilers

If you do not have an individual boiler or immersion system within your home, your hot water and heating will be supplied by a communal system. The temperatures on these systems are set, regulated and monitored by The Bernicia Group on a monthly basis. If there is a communal cold water storage tank we will inspect these on an annual basis.



Immersion Heaters

It is vital the hot water cylinder is in working order to ensure that all connections are clear and water is flowing freely and to the required pressure.

Immersion Heater Safety

(Warning signs that there might be a problem to look out for):

- Excessively hot water coming out of the hot water taps
- Excessive noise or 'burbling' from the hot water cylinder
- Hot water coming out of certain cold water taps
- Steam/moisture in the roof space
- If you have an immersion heater do not reduce the temperature on the thermostat or turn off for longer than a week as bacteria can multiply at lower temperatures.



Taps

- Tap spouts may become contaminated from external sources. To be safe sterilise tap spouts by wiping with a general descaling product.
- Unused taps should be flushed weekly.



Showers

- If you have a shower fitted with a flexible hose make sure that a hose retaining ring is fitted to prevent the shower head falling into your bath water.
- Clean your shower head every 3 months (or earlier if required) to prevent scale and debris build up.
- Following a holiday or extended period where the shower is not used, it is essential that the shower head be lowered into a bucket or plastic bag, and the shower run to the operating temperature, whilst taking care not to make or release spray droplets into the atmosphere.



Garden Safety

- Garden hoses should be drained and stored out of direct sunlight where possible.
- Water butts should be regularly drained and cleaned to prevent bacterial build up.



Water hygiene risk assessment

Bernicia adopt a practical and proportionate application of health and safety to our properties. Whilst there is a duty to assess the risk from exposure to legionella to ensure the safety of tenants in our home, this will not require us to complete an in-depth detailed assessment in all properties.

The risk from hot and cold water systems in most residential settings are generally considered to be low owing to regular water usage and turnover. Where an in-depth assessment is required, this will be completed by a 3rd party working on behalf of Bernicia and if we find anything that needs further control or repaired during the assessment, we will arrange the necessary works.

If you require any further information or wish to discuss, please contact Bernicia on 0344 800 3800.



Remember – Keep your hot water hot, your cold water cold and keep it moving!

How to contact us

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