

Independent Guide

How often should I be carrying out temperature tests for my domestic water outlets?



Independent workplace compliance

Introduction

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) recommend that temperature testing of sentinel domestic outlets (those closest and furthest from the water supply and representative of the system as a whole) should take place on a monthly basis, and all outlets in a building should be tested on an annual basis.

Why do we measure temperature?

This is to make sure that cold water temperatures are operating below 20°C within two minutes of flushing and all hot water services achieve between 50°C and 60°C within one minute of flushing. This task must be recorded also stating the location, date and the name of the person carrying out the checks.

Is this always the case?

However, in some instances carrying out temperature tests of a greater number of outlets in a building more regularly may also be needed, as for example water temperatures can change significantly due to seasonal variation. Where cold water temperatures might be 10°C in the winter months, mains water is often supplied above 20°C during the summer. These temperatures can provide an ideal environment in which Legionella can multiply; putting yourself and occupants at risk.

How can we manage the risk?

You can manage this risk by understanding the water temperatures in your building throughout the year; this will enable you to take suitable actions and precautions. For example, Legionella grow best in water that is stagnant, and more frequent temperature testing of all outlets can identify where stagnant water may be sitting and gaining heat within a system.

Using this information, you can implement a flushing regime of low usage outlets to increase water turnover and minimise the risk of Legionella infection; even during the summer months.

This guide is of a general nature; specific advice can be obtained from Assurity Consulting.

Assurity Consulting is the UK's leading independent compliance consultancy specialising in workplace health, safety and environmental solutions. We have over 35 years' experience of helping customers of all sizes, from across all sectors, manage their compliance responsibilities, making sure that their organisation is compliant, their employees are safe, their processes are cost effective and their management team is in control.



FS 24510

EMS 84550

OHS 590676

Assurity Consulting Limited

26 Redkirk Way Horsham West Sussex RH13 5QH

t +44 (0)1403 269375 e info@assurityconsulting.co.uk

w assurityconsulting.co.uk

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