



Legionnaires' disease Safety advice note for hot tub hire businesses

Q. Does health and safety law apply to my business?

Yes, if you hire out hot tubs you have a legal duty to ensure the safety of yourself, your employees, your customers and other persons using the equipment. This applies up to the point that you hand the hot tub over to the customer.

Q. Who is my regulator?

Health and safety enforcement is split between HSE and local authorities. If you operate your business from your house, HSE will be your enforcing authority. If you store and hire out equipment anywhere else, the Council will be your regulator.

Q. What do I need to do to comply with health and safety law?

You must assess the general risks posed to yourself, any employees and any other person affected by the business, including the hirer and users of the hot tub. You do not have to write down this general risk assessment unless you have 5 or more employees, but it is good practice to record the significant risks and how you control them.

You can find simple advice about risk assessment and health and safety hazards at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/abc/>.

By law, you will need to have a **written scheme of control** for *Legionella*; more information on this is on page 2 of this advice note.

Q. What sort of hazards do I need to consider?

- Physical hazards such as electrical safety, manual handling (lifting and carrying), slips trips & falls.
- Biological hazards such as *Legionella* and other bacteria that can grow in hot tubs.
- Chemical hazards from the storage and use of cleaning and water treatment chemicals.

Q. What is *Legionella* and why do I need to consider it?

Legionella is the bacteria that causes Legionnaires' Disease, a lung infection that can cause serious disease and death. It is spread by contaminated water droplets which can be inhaled deep into the lungs.

Legionella bacteria need warmth and food to grow in water systems. Hot tubs and spa pools are what are called "Legionella risk systems", because they provide the ideal environment for bacterial growth and the bubbling from air jets creates aerosols which can be breathed in by users.

Q. [How do I control *Legionella* bacteria?](#)

HSE have issued guidance for the safe operation of spa pools and hot tubs as HSG282 - *The control of legionella and other infectious agents in spa-pool systems*. You can download a free copy from www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg282.htm.

There are three important steps to take:

1. You must ensure the spa pool is installed and commissioned so that it will be safe and any risks to health and safety are controlled when it's in use.
2. You must provide adequate information for the user about the risks of the product. You must also provide them with enough test strips and treatment chemicals to keep the water safe for the period of hire.
3. After each period of hire, the spa pool should be completely drained, cleaned, refilled, disinfected and drained again. When stored, the spa pool should be dry, including the insides of the pipework, as far as practicable.

Q. [What is a written scheme of control?](#)

A written scheme of control is a summary of all of the actions and checks that you will take to ensure the risk from *Legionella* bacteria is minimised. You are required to have a written scheme of control, even if you don't need to write down your overall risk assessment.

Keep the manufacturer's operating instructions for your hot tubs with your scheme of control and make sure that you are following those instructions in what you do.

Q. [Am I responsible for the way the hirer uses the hot tub?](#)

No, but make sure that they understand the safety rules, including getting the pH right and allowing time for disinfectants to clean the water between periods of use. This information must be given to them in writing when you hand the hot tub over to them. Show them how to test and treat the water and handle the chemicals safely.

They may be excited about getting the hot tub, but get the attention of a responsible adult and that they understand what they need to do to keep themselves and their family safe.

Q. [Is there anything special I need to do because of COVID?](#)

No. If you have good cleaning and disinfection procedures in place between hires, that will be sufficient.

Q. [If I need more advice, who should I contact?](#)

You should find answers to most of your questions in HSG282.

The British and Irish Spa and Hot Tub Association (BISHTA) provide information for hot tub businesses and users on their website at www.bishta.co.uk.

Contact us

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