



Division of Food and Recreational Safety

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Tips to Prevent Legionella Growth in Water Systems

Did you know that a reduction in water usage can be a contributing factor to *Legionella* growth?

Legionella is the bacteria that causes the respiratory diseases Legionnaire's disease and Pontiac fever. As hotels and motels scale down occupancy during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to continue maintaining the building water systems to prevent the growth of *Legionella*.

Legionella can grow within many parts of a building's plumbing system. It is most commonly associated with:

- Cooling towers
- Showers
- Hot water heaters and plumbing fixtures
- Whirlpools or hot tubs
- Decorative water fountains

What can you do now to prevent *Legionella* growth?

- Review the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [guidance for building water systems](#).

- Develop a water management program for your facility using the [CDC Legionella toolkit](#).
- Flush hot and cold water fixtures in unoccupied rooms and low-use areas on a weekly or biweekly basis.
- Avoid turning down or setting back the temperature setting of water heaters.
- Maintain normal whirlpool maintenance and disinfectant levels even if a whirlpool is closed to the public, or drain the whirlpool [according to this guidance](#).

Additional resources about *Legionella*, Legionnaire's disease, Pontiac fever, and how to develop a water management program can found on the [Wisconsin Department of Health Services website](#) and the [CDC website](#).

Any questions for DATCP can be sent to datcpdfsrec@wisconsin.gov.

