CARE & NURSING Essentials

YOUR INDEPENDENT GUIDE TO THE CARE INDUSTRY

# WATER HYGIENE INSIGHTS

## A BALANCING ACT:
Managing Costs Without Compromising Water Hygiene in Care Homes

## THE INVISIBLE THREAT:
Legionella and the Importance of Risk Assessments in Care Homes

## Housing Association fined £900k for poor management of Legionella Risks

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# Experts in all aspects of Water Hygiene

✓ Best Water Hygiene Services Company: England — BUILD FACILITIES MANAGEMENT AWARDS 2024

✓ Certified members of Legionella Control Association — KEEPING WATER SYSTEMS SAFE

**Is water hygiene giving you that sinking feeling?**

**Are you drowning in health and safety legal requirements and code of practices?**

**As nationwide providers of water hygiene solutions for over 20 years we can help to mitigate risk to keep your care home residents and staff safe.**

## Our Services:

- Monitoring Programme
- Tank Clean & Disinfecting
- Risk Assessments
- TMV Servicing
- Remedials
- Water Sampling
- Shower Cleans
- Legionella Control

Legionella Control Association — KEEPING WATER SYSTEMS SAFE
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Contact us for more information or to arrange a free review of your current water management processes.

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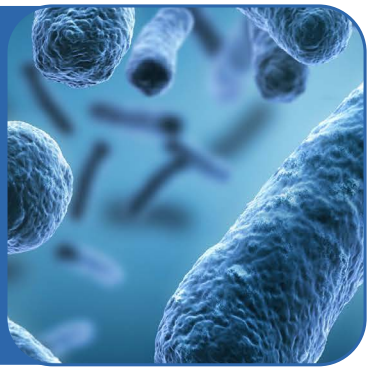

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At Irrigonics, we specialize in providing healthcare facilities with innovative water hygiene solutions and where systems are more complex or have ongoing issues with bacteria we have our constant chemical dosing system with silver-stabilised hydrogen peroxide.


# a message from **Irrigonics...**

Dear Readers, welcome to the first edition of Water Hygiene Insights, the official magazine of Irrigonics Ltd. As we launch this new publication, we are excited to bring you a wealth of knowledge and practical guidance tailored specifically for the care home and nursing home industry across the UK.

Water hygiene isn't just about ticking compliance boxes; it's about protecting residents, supporting your staff, and running a safe, efficient operation. In this issue, we will tackle some of the key challenges you face, from managing Legionella risks to implementing the latest disinfection techniques. Our goal is to make these topics approachable and inspire best practices.

At Irrigonics we know how complex and demanding water hygiene can be, ensuring the health and safety of residents while managing operational costs and compliance deadlines can feel like a balancing act. Through this magazine, we aim to simplify that process by offering expert advice, top tips and updates on the latest industry standards.

Thanks for joining us on this journey—we're excited to support you every step of the way, helping you to deliver the best for your residents and teams.

*Phil White, Managing Director*

# A Balancing Act:

## Managing Costs Without Compromising Water Hygiene in Care Homes

Care homes across the UK are under immense pressure to maintain exceptional safety standards while managing tight budgets. Increasing regulatory demands leave many asking: how can we keep residents safe without overspending?

Water hygiene is a critical part of this balancing act. While maintaining compliance can feel like a costly burden, a single oversight could lead to severe health risks, hefty fines, or reputational damage. The good news? With smart strategies, care homes can prioritize safety and stay financially viable.

### The High Cost of Neglect

Unfortunately failure to address water hygiene risks can have devastating consequences. In 2024, a supported housing association was fined £900,000 after a Legionella outbreak endangered residents within the home. "Prevention is always cheaper than crisis management," explains Dale Hunter, Technical Director at Irrigonics. "There are ways to invest smartly in water hygiene without breaking the bank."

### Top Tips for Savings

- **Technology:** On-line portals for compliance data capture can save time and money along with ensuring records meet the standards required by inspectors.
- **Streamline Risk Assessments:** Targeted risk assessments ensure you focus resources on high-risk areas while scaling back on low-risk services.
- **Review Maintenance Contracts:** Adjusting service schedules can help save money while ensuring compliance is achieved.
- **Train Staff:** Empowering maintenance teams through effective training reduces dependency on external contractors and can save money.

### A Mindset Shift

"Cutting corners isn't the answer," emphasizes Dale. "It's about working smarter, with a few changes to practices, care homes can ensure safety without overspending.

At Irrigonics Ltd, we're committed to helping care homes achieve this balance, delivering tailored solutions for safe and cost-effective water hygiene management.

# Residents put at risk of deadly disease as company fined £900k

A company has been fined following an outbreak of legionella at its sheltered housing accommodation in Birkenhead, putting vulnerable residents at risk of contracting Legionnaires' disease.

The deadly bacteria was detected following the sampling of its water systems in the communal areas and flats in July and August 2018.

With all 44 samples testing positive for legionella, the residents were then evacuated from the Sanctuary Housing premises in August 2018, before returning in October and November 2018 after the water system was remedied through the installation of a chemical dosing unit.

A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found Sanctuary Housing poorly managed the risk of legionella in the water system, with staff inadequately trained and supervised. The residents were a particularly vulnerable group due to their age and underlying health issues, putting them at a higher risk of contracting Legionnaires' disease.

Not only was there a failure by Sanctuary Housing to manage the risk of contamination in its water systems, but the company had not provided its staff with adequate instruction and training.

**Full Story - https://press.hse.gov.uk/2024/10/22/residents-put-at-risk-of-deadly-disease-as-company-fined-900k/**

**Other related stories – 3rd December 2024, inmate dies and company fined £600k**

**Company failed to manage legionella risk as prisoner dies – HSE Media Centre**

## Irrigonics win "Best Water Hygiene Services England" at the Build Facilities management awards 2024

BUILD FACILITIES MANAGEMENT AWARDS 2024

*"We are thrilled to be recognised for our commitment to Water Hygiene, exceptional standards and customer satisfaction, I am very proud of the hard work and dedication of our full team who are out and about providing our award winning service across the whole of the UK"*

**- Vicki, Operations Manager**


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# The Invisible Threat:

## Legionella and the Importance of Risk Assessments in Care Homes

In the calm and controlled environment of a care home, there's a silent menace that often goes unnoticed: Legionella bacteria. This microscopic pathogen can flourish in water systems and cause Legionnaires' disease, a potentially fatal form of pneumonia. For elderly residents and those with compromised immune systems, the threat is even more severe.

But what exactly is Legionella, and why does it matter so much to care home operators? More importantly, how can proactive water hygiene practices prevent tragedy and ensure compliance with UK health and safety regulations?

### What Is Legionella?

Legionella is a naturally occurring bacterium found in water systems, particularly stagnant or warm water environments. It thrives in temperatures between 20°C and 50°C, making poorly maintained water systems in care homes and nursing homes an ideal breeding ground. Showers, taps, water tanks, and even decorative fountains can become hotbeds for contamination if not properly monitored and maintained.

The risk is particularly high in care homes, where residents are more vulnerable to infection.

### Why Risk Assessments Are Critical

In the UK, care homes are legally required to conduct Legionella risk assessments under the Health and Safety at Work Act and the Approved Code of Practice (ACoP) L8. These assessments are vital tools to identify and mitigate risks before they escalate.

Risk assessments evaluate key areas such as:

- The design and condition of water systems.
- The presence of biofilms or sediment that promote bacterial growth.
- Temperature control and water flow patterns.
- The maintenance schedule of critical components like calorifiers, TMVs, and storage tanks.

### What Can Care Homes Do?

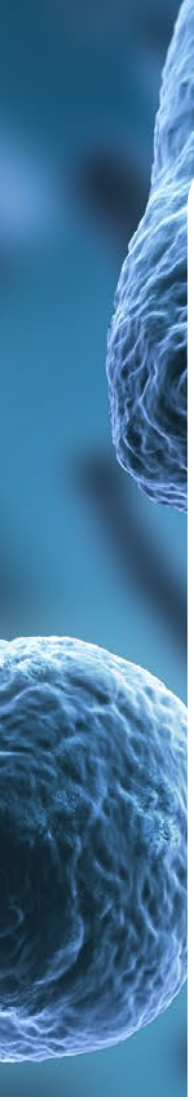
For care homes looking to improve their Legionella management, the first step is simple: conduct or update your risk assessment. Partnering with a qualified water hygiene specialist can provide the expertise needed to identify risks and develop a tailored action plan.

Regular monitoring, staff training, and a proactive maintenance schedule are also key. By investing in these areas, care homes can stay ahead of potential issues and foster an environment of trust with residents and their families.

### A Shared Responsibility

The fight against Legionella is a shared responsibility, involving managers, maintenance teams, and external water hygiene experts.

At Irrigonics Ltd, we're proud to support care homes across the UK with expert Legionella risk assessments and practical solutions to keep water systems safe. Because when it comes to water hygiene, there's no room for compromise.

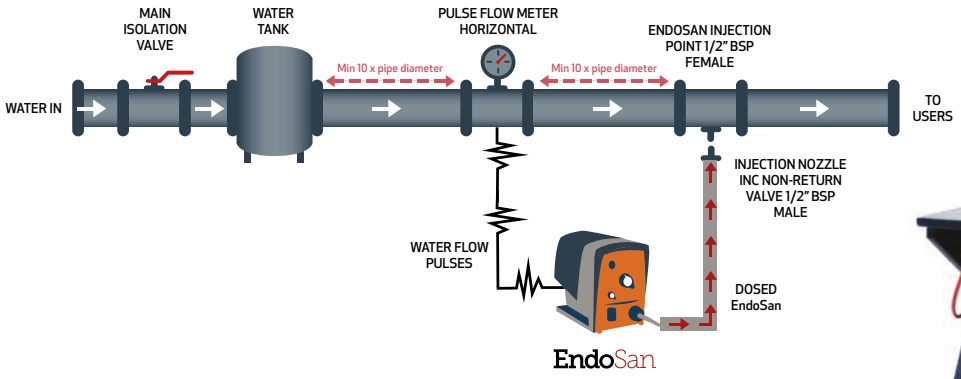


## A **Legionella Risk Assessment** identifies and evaluates risks associated with Legionella bacteria in water systems. At Irrigonics it involves a team of water hygiene specialists to support you every step of the way.

1. Irrigonics start with a telephone consultation with a water hygiene specialist to establish your requirements.
2. Site survey by a qualified Risk Assessor to inspect water systems, including tanks, calorifiers, and pipework.
3. Water temperature monitoring and system schematics are reviewed
4. Potential risk factors, such as stagnant water, scale buildup, and poor insulation, are documented.
5. Sampling may be conducted for lab analysis of bacteria presence.
6. Control measures, like regular flushing and disinfection, are recommended.
7. A detailed report highlights risks, preventive actions, and a management plan to ensure ongoing safety, aligning with UK ACoP L8 and HSG274 standards.
8. Once the draft report is issued, Irrigonics provide you with a review consultation meeting to discuss the findings and recommend next steps.
9. Irrigonics 24/7 online portal runs 365 days a year, so you can stay up to date with changes.

# Energy-Saving Benefits of Irrigonics' Constant Dosing with Silver-Stabilised Hydrogen Peroxide

At Irrigonics, we specialize in providing healthcare facilities with innovative water hygiene solutions and where systems are more complex or have ongoing issues with bacteria we have our constant chemical dosing system with silver-stabilised hydrogen peroxide.



This advanced approach ensures continuous protection against harmful pathogens, including Legionella pneumophila, while promoting water safety and operational efficiency and unlike other dosing applications ours significantly improves the water quality by removing impurities.

Our constant dosing system delivers a precise, automated application of silver-stabilised hydrogen peroxide into your water system. This dual-action solution combines the oxidizing power of hydrogen peroxide with the residual antimicrobial effects of silver ions, breaking down biofilms and eliminating bacteria. By maintaining constant disinfection, it provides ongoing safety even in low-flow or stagnant areas.

An additional benefit of our constant dosing service is the potential opportunity of significant energy savings. Traditional Legionella control requires maintaining hot water at 60-65°C, which is energy-intensive. With Irrigonics' solution, water systems can operate safely at lower temperatures, reducing energy consumption, lowering carbon emissions, and cutting utility costs.

Our eco-friendly formulation also reduces scale buildup, ensuring the longevity of pipes, appliances, and medical equipment while improving water quality. Irrigonics' automated systems integrate seamlessly into existing infrastructure, delivering reliable, hassle-free water hygiene.

Choose Irrigonics' constant dosing service for safe, efficient, and sustainable water management in your healthcare facility—protecting patients, staff, and your bottom line.

# Why choose a company who is a member of the Legionella Control Association (LCA)?

Back in November 2023, The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) sent out an email letter to Managers and Proprietors of all regulated Residential Care, Nursing Homes, Independent Hospitals with a clear call to action following a marked increase of notifications that they had received from registered and regulated services relating to detection of legionella bacteria in water systems.

Legionella Control Association
KEEPING WATER SYSTEMS SAFE

The letter (see extract below), which is still as relevant today as the day it was written, concludes with a strong recommendation to use companies that are members of the LCA to achieve optimum water safety standards in registered and regulated premises.

The approved Code of Practice (ACOP) and guidance issued by The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) 'The control of legionella bacteria in water systems' (L8) and HSG274 both refer to the Code of Conduct administered by the LCA as the level of service that should be expected from contractors undertaking relevant activities.

Irrigonics are proud to be certified members of the LCA. Our regularly audited management systems, compliance with Code of Conduct and Service Standards means that we are well placed to assist our clients in controlling the legionella risk associated with their water systems.

To

Subject

**The Legionella Control Association (LCA)**
LCA is a voluntary organisation that operates a membership scheme for companies undertaking activities associated with legionella control. Members are audited by occupationally competent auditors prior to registration against a code of conduct. This is to ensure they operate appropriate management systems for services they offer and they are required to summarise these in a 'Statement of Compliance'. Annual audit of the management systems and procedures and a sample of the output from those procedures for compliance with the Code is an ongoing requirement of LCA membership.

LCA membership can be attained for various services including:
- Risk assessment
- Water treatment
- Hot and cold water monitoring and inspection
- Cleaning and disinfection
- Independent consultancy
- Training
- Legionella monitoring
- Plant and equipment.

**Action by providers**
RQIA believe that to achieve optimum water safety standards in registered and regulated premises, where the above services are carried out by third party companies, the companies should be members of LCA. Going forward, RQIA would encourage you to ensure that all outsourced services listed above are carried out by a company holding relevant membership category with the LCA.A register of LCA members is available on their website www.legionellacontrol.org.uk

The LCA standards and guidance as well as a range of useful resources are also available on the website including a guide to selecting a competent service provider: ABuyers-Guide-to-Using-the-Code-of-Conduct-for-Service-Providors-702.19-09-23.pdf (legionellacontrol.org.uk)

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