RESTARTING SYSTEMS

As a minimum progressive flushing of the pipework and storage tanks which provide water supplies to households, and small industrial, commercial units and retail buildings to introduce fresh water into the system must be carried out before consumer access.

There are some simple steps that can be taken to recommission your drinking water system:

- The flushing should be sufficient to run until the water is clear and feels cool to the touch.
- Where water is supplied from storage, these storage cisterns should all be emptied and filled with water direct from the incoming supply, before the taps are flushed;
- Flushing should be carried out in a manner which minimises aerosol generation, e.g. removing shower heads prior to flushing, to reduce the risks of Legionella transmission.
- Safety considerations should be made for those flushing including appropriate PPE;

Larger buildings, those with tanks, showers, calorifiers and more complex pipework the expectation is likely to be for more extensive flushing followed by cleaning and disinfection. If you have a complex plumbing system you should ensure you have a competent person to oversee this work. Recommissioning your water supply should be in-line with your water safety management plan, including pressure testing all systems.

Other steps suggested the European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Disease is listed below. Although this guidance is aimed at *Legionella* prevention, the advice is also relevant in the wider context.

- carry out a full system disinfection of the cold-water system, flushing through to all outlets to achieve 50 mg/L free chlorine for at least an hour checking that this level is achieved at the furthest outlets, top up when required.
- Flush out and refill the system to achieve maximum normal operating target levels of disinfection.
- Refill and reheat the calorifier to 60 °C. and when the calorifier/ storage water has been heated to 60 °C throughout, open the valves and flush through all outlets taking care to avoid any scalding risk.
- Monitor temperatures and biocide levels where applicable, adjust where necessary, for at least 48 hours and then take microbiological samples. Legionella samples from the sentinel outlets taken before 48 hours following disinfection may give false negative results.
- When you are satisfied the hot and cold-water systems are under control then reopen the building.
- Ensure you keep all documentation for inspection: including the review and update of risk assessments (these can be annotated by hand) including monitoring data etc., with evidence of who carried out the monitoring, add time date and signature.
- Follow the advice for other additional waters systems or equipment as above.

Note: The above is taken from Section 6 – When restarting - of the ESGLI Guidance for managing Legionella in building water systems during the COVID-19 pandemic.
https://www.escmid.org/fileadmin/src/media/PDFs/3Research_Projects/ESGLI/ESGLI_GUIDANCE_FOR_MANAGING_LEGIONELLA_IN_BUILDING_WATER_SYSTEMS_DURING_THE_COVID-19_PANDEMIC_20200418_v02.00.pdf