

Policy Title
Water Safety Policy

Policy Owner:
Executive Director of Property Services

Accountable Lead
Senior Property Safety Manager



Policy Control	
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Link to Strategy	Quality Homes
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Policy Control	
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1. Policy Statement and Aims

Curo recognises its duty of care as an employer, landlord and developer. The aim of this Water Safety Policy is to set out the key principles and commitments for the management framework in line with all relevant statutory obligations and sector best practice.

Curo recognises the risk to human health from Legionella in water including Legionellosis and other related diseases. Curo also recognises that there is a higher risk of infection within certain groups of people, e.g., people over 45, smokers and heavy drinkers, people suffering from chronic respiratory or kidney disease, diabetes, lung and heart disease or anyone with an impaired immune system.

It is Curo's duty of care to protect all colleagues, customers, contractors and others from potential exposure to Legionella through proactive management of water systems, and particularly measures to reduce and control the risk of bacterial growth and proliferation of other organisms, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Failure to adhere to this policy and associated procedures may have significant impacts on customer safety with resulting legal and financial consequences. This may include legal action by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) or the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH) resulting in significant fines and a downgrade of the overall Governance rating of Curo as a registered provider.

Definitions

Definitions are set out in Annex A to this policy

2. Scope, roles and responsibilities

The Board and Executive, through the Policy Owner, ensure that the policy delivers Curo's strategic objectives and reflects corporate values.

The Accountable Lead is accountable to the Executive for the effective implementation of the policy in Curo, so that the principles are achieved through appropriate team plans and objectives, and procedures – with appropriate RACIs – translate the policy objectives into practice.

2.1 Scope

Persons

This policy applies to all relevant persons including customers, colleagues, visitors, managing agents and contractors, who may be affected by Legionella bacteria whilst living or working within or near any premises which is owned or managed by Curo.

Premises

This policy and supporting procedures apply to all Curo premises which have water systems and might be temporarily or permanently occupied, utilised or maintained by any persons for residential, community, administrative or other work purposes. For example:

- Individual domestic units including market rent properties.
- Purpose built blocks of flats.
- Converted town Houses, including Grade I & II listed buildings.
- Extra care schemes.
- Houses in multiple occupation (HMO's).
- Properties or schemes under refurbishment.
- Commercial units.
- Sheltered and supported housing schemes.
- Community spaces.

Leasehold, general needs, market rent and shared ownership properties (domestic)

Curo has no direct responsibility for managing water systems within domestic leasehold, general needs, market rent or shared ownership premises unless specified within the lease or tenancy agreement. However, Curo has a legal duty to ensure the risk of exposure of tenants to legionella is properly assessed and controlled. Curo will therefore conduct legionella risk assessments across the full housing portfolio.

Curo is responsible for any communal water systems which may directly or indirectly supply leasehold, general needs, market rent and shared ownership premises. As such, Curo will be responsible for the prevention of the growth of Legionella bacteria and the management of those common parts and sections of the general water system.

Leaseholders, general needs, market rent and shared ownership customers are responsible for carrying out general domestic precautions within their own homes such as storing hot water at 60°C, cleaning of shower heads and flushing of little used outlets. Where leaseholders, general needs, market rent and shared ownership properties possess other risk systems, they must maintain it in accordance with HSG274 Part 3 - Other risk systems and also follow manufacturers' recommended guidelines.

We will provide customers within these properties with information and guidance on how to maintain the systems they have.

Leasehold properties (commercial)

Curo has no direct responsibility for managing water systems within commercial leasehold premises unless specified within the lease agreement. However, Curo is responsible for any communal water systems which may directly or indirectly supply commercial leasehold premises. As such, Curo will be responsible for the prevention of the growth of Legionella bacteria and the management of those common parts and sections of the water system. Commercial leaseholders have legal duties as an employer under the legislation and best practice listed at section 1. They are responsible for assessing and controlling Legionella risks resulting from their activities and within their leased premises.

Partnerships and other contractual arrangements

Curo has several partnership arrangements with other managing agents and service providers both within Curo owned property and within third party owned premises. Curo will ensure responsibilities for preventative and precautionary measures for Legionella are clearly set out within contracts and service level agreements. Curo will cooperate and coordinate with partners to ensure they meet the requirements of the contract and that Legionella risks are adequately assessed and controlled.

Context

This policy is applicable to Curo Group which includes Curo Places, Curo Market Rent Services, and Curo Choice in the context of ensuring all preventative and precautionary measures are taken.

This policy sits within the context of the wider Health and Safety Property Safety Policy together with the strategic and operational commitments for Water identified within the Property Safety Commitments (ProSaC) document agreed by Board (2021).

2.2 Roles and responsibilities

Combined Board and Exec

The Combined Board, through the Chief Executive and Director of Property Safety will ensure that the Water Safety Policy delivers Curo's strategic objectives and reflects corporate values.

Chief Executive

As the 'duty holder' has overall strategic accountability for this policy and associated procedures and is responsible for:

- Leading the strategic direction for the Water Safety Policy and Procedure and for all aspects of legislative and best practice compliance.
- Providing sufficient resources to meet the requirements of this policy and associated procedures.
- Appointing a 'Responsible Person' for the management of Legionella risks.

Senior Property Safety Manager

Accountable for:

- Appointing competent persons to carry out LRAs to prevent and control Legionella risks.
- Appointing competent persons to carry out PPM regime.
- Design and implement written scheme based on LRA findings.
- Identify required resources necessary to implement a proactive property investment strategy for water systems including, where appropriate, the removal of stored water vessels.
- Ensure all legal requirements are met and a robust program of LRAs is established, implemented and monitored in line with ProSaC commitments.
- Ensure any identified remedial actions are investigated as a result of LRAs.
- Ensure adequate oversight and scrutiny of measured performance in line with ProSaC commitments.
- Keep the Combined Board appraised of any legislative changes for water and any required changes to strategy, policy or procedure.
- Maintain oversight of the implementation of this policy and procedure and keep it regularly reviewed.
- Sponsor audits of this policy and procedure to monitor the effectiveness, within agreed timescales and in liaison with the Governance team.
- Ensure any significant Legionella incidents or risks are escalated to the Executive and Combined Board where identified.
- Develop a rigorous approach to Quality Assurance (QA) of LRAs and PPM regimes, to ensure a high quality of service delivery across the business and the identification of service improvement opportunities.
- Setting of budgets to deliver all works in relation to water safety.
- Investigate any reported or suspected cases of Legionella. Record this as an incident in the risk reporting management system and ensure the Health and Safety Manager is made aware.

Contract Business Partner

Accountable for:

- Day to day management of the LRA compliance programme.
- Day to day management of the PPM programme.
- Creation of programmes and works orders.
- Engaging with water hygiene contractors.
- Maintaining all relevant systems and records for the LRA compliance programme.
- Maintaining all relevant systems and records for the PPM programme.
- Ensuring payments are made to contractors for any completed works.
- Procuring of new contractors.
- Management of the team responsible for administering the contract.

Director of Property Maintenance & Building Safety

Accountable for:

- Where applicable, monitoring of commercial leaseholder's responsibilities for water safety testing within their units and taking any relevant action for breaches of lease agreements.
- Ensuring the removal of dead legs on new water system installs and refurbishments.
- Ensuring correct sizing of stored water if being replaced.
- Where relevant, fitting of bi-law 30 kits and protecting against heat transfer when running new hot and cold pipes.
- Ensuring empty homes are flushed every 7 days.
- Ensuring shower heads and hoses are replaced at change of occupancy.
- Ensuring TMVs are serviced in accordance with planned programs.
- Ensuring stored water is identified within properties.
- Ensuring only WRAS approved fittings are used.

Director of Customer Accounts & Lettings

Accountable for:

- Ensuring adequate provision of water and Legionella safety information to new customers within the lettings process.

Director of Estates Services

Accountable for:

- Referring any identified 'little used outlets' to the Property Safety Team for incorporation in monitoring regimes.

Head of Operations – Building Independence Service

Accountable for:

- Ensuring flushing regimes are carried out within Curo Choice schemes.

Director of Customer Contact Team

Accountable for:

- Referral of customer concerns about water systems to relevant internal departments or the Property Compliance Team.

Facilities Manager

Responsible for:

- Working with the Property Safety Team to ensure all highlighted actions following the landlords annual water safety assessment of the Maltings Head Office are completed to ensure compliance.
- Conduct weekly water flushing on all water outlets in the Maltings Head Office and report any issues.
- Allow access for Planned Safety Teams contractors to conduct routine safety assessments and temperature checks.

Learning & Development Team

Responsible for:

- Liaising with relevant business leads to ensure competency requirements are identified and delivered in line with section 8 of the Water Safety Procedure.
- Providing assurance to Executive management that competency levels are met and that adequate records are held.

Colleagues

In relation to water and Legionella safety, responsible for:

- Complying with this policy and associated procedures, so far as is necessary, to enable statutory and other obligations to be met.
- Informing line management or the Property Safety Team directly of any defects, situations or shortcomings which may constitute a water or Legionella hazard or risk.
- Attend and comply with any identified training or instruction required for the management of Legionella risks.
- Make full and proper use of any control measure or facility provided for the purposes of compliance with this policy.
- Make full and proper use of any protective clothing or respiratory protection provided for the prevention of the risk of exposure to Legionella.

Health and Safety manager

Responsible for:

- Supporting the responsible person in the investigations and recording of suspected Legionella cases.
- Report any known cases of Legionella where this may impose a risk to the wider organisation to the Governance team using the reportable event form on the Orb.
- Inform the responsible lead of any reported cases of Legionella or sickness caused by water in a Curo property.

3. Principles

As well as securing legal compliance, this policy and associated procedures are intended to promote a proactive approach to managing the risk of Legionella bacteria to our properties, residents, colleagues and general public.

Curo will:

- Identify and assess sources of Legionella risk through the completion of Legionella risk assessments (LRA).
- Implement control measures to negate the risk of Legionella bacteria.
- Monitor and control communal water systems to ensure that water is delivered to outlets at a safe temperature for the required application.
- Promptly carry out remedial actions required to guard health and safety, taking account of the needs of individual residents.
- Ensure that external contractors, consultants, and internal colleagues responsible for conducting periodic servicing and testing of water systems are competent and have the appropriate training, competency or accreditation to do so.
- Maintain records of LRAs, pre-planned maintenance visits and remedial works which have been carried out for a minimum of 5 years.

As best practice, Curo will:

- Ensure that all water systems are designed and commissioned in line with best practice standards and to avoid, where possible, any stagnation.
- Ensure that all water systems are operated within recommended temperature parameters to prevent the likelihood of bacterial and Legionella growth.
- Conduct periodic testing and inspection of hot and cold-water systems in line with L8 and HSG 274 guidelines (refer to Legionella procedure and table 2.1 in HSG274 Part 2)
- Where microbial growth is identified, water treatment and control programmes suitable for domestic hot and cold-water systems will be considered.
- Carry out routine microbiological water sampling.
- Introduce pre-planned maintenance regimes for communal water systems, where identified within the LRA.
- Ensure that any temperature controls introduced to manage Legionella do not present scalding risks to vulnerable persons.
- Ensure appropriate action is taken if there is a suspected outbreak of Legionellosis.
- Carry out chemical sampling where a customer believes the drinking water is having a detrimental impact to their health.

4. Application

Operational procedures

A set of operational procedures provides the detailed framework to translate this policy into practice.

Provision of information

We will provide information about the location, condition and status of water installations within our control to colleagues, residents and contractors where it is necessary to comply with the aims of this policy.

Training and Competency

Appropriate training will be provided to all colleagues designated to carry out specific tasks under this policy, their managers, and all whose role is identified in the matrix of roles and responsibilities. The details of such shall be documented in operational procedures but generally falls into two categories:

- Policy and general awareness training
- Role-specific training

Training will be recorded, reinforced and repeated at appropriate intervals.

We will ensure that all contractors whom we employ provide evidence that their workforce are competent for the tasks they have been assigned.

Competency is defined as the combination of training, skills, experience and knowledge that a person has and their ability to apply them to perform a task safely, efficiently and effectively. Other factors such as attitude and physical ability can affect someone's competence. Individuals must be aware of limits to their knowledge and competence. For many tasks, the ability to communicate well, both verbally and in writing also needs to be considered.

Systems and records

We will ensure that there are robust administrative systems in place to allow the effective management of our services and to ensure compliance with its legal requirements. A copy of all inspections and certificates will be kept electronically and retained for a minimum of five years.

5. Associated documents

This policy operates in the context of the following key legislation:

- ACOP L8 legionnaires disease: The control of legionella bacteria in water systems (HSE)
- Health and Safety at Work Act etc. 1974 (HASWA)
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSWR as amended)
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (as amended) (COSHH)
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 (LTA as amended)
- Housing Act 2004 (HA)
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 (HFHHA)
- Housing Health and Safety Rating System Regulations 2005 (HHSRS)

- The Workplace (Health Safety & Welfare) Regulations 1992 (WHSWR)
- Construction, Design and Management Regulations 2015 (CDM)
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)
- Building Safety Act 2022

This policy operates in the context of the following relevant best practice, sector standards and approved codes of practice (as amended or updated):

- HSG274 legionnaires disease: Technical guidance part 2: The control of legionella bacteria in hot and cold water systems (HSE)
- HSG274 Legionnaires disease: technical guidance part 3: The control of legionella bacteria in other risk systems
- INDG458 Legionnaires disease – A brief guide for duty holders (HSE)
- PD 855468- Guide to flushing and disinfection of services supplying water for domestic use within buildings and their curtilages
- BS8554- Code of practice for the sampling and monitoring of hot and cold water services in buildings
- BS 8580- Legionella Risk Assessment
- BS8680- Water quality – Water safety plans
- BS7592- Sampling for legionella bacteria in water system

This policy operates in conjunction with the Curo Water Safety Procedure.

6. Measurement of Success

- This policy and any subsidiary procedures will be reviewed regularly by the Senior Property Safety Manager (or a more senior colleague) in conjunction with the Property Safety Compliance Supervisor (Water).
- Proposed changes to this policy will be reviewed by the Building Safety Oversight Group prior to recommendation for approval by the Property Services Leadership Team.
- Operational performance and compliance data will be included in regular reports to the Building Safety Oversight Group.
- The success of the policy will be measured via the scorecard which is submitted to the Building Safety Oversight Group. The scorecard calculates the number of works which have been attended and completed on time.
- We will ensure that current procedures are reviewed regularly to allow for the effective discharge of its legal obligations.
- We will regularly carry out quality assurance auditing of both internal and external contractor works.

7. Equality Impact Assessment

An equality impact assessment was carried out in January 2024 by the Senior Property Safety Manager in conjunction with the Property Safety Manager and Property Safety Supervisor. No people impact was identified in relation to this policy and therefore a full equality impact assessment was not necessary.

Appendix A Definitions

Curo or We - will mean Curo-Group or a nominated representative appointed by them.

Aerosol a suspension in a gaseous medium of solid particles, liquid particles or solid and liquid particles having a negligible falling velocity. In the context of this document, it is a suspension of particles which may contain Legionella with a typical droplet size of $<5\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ that can be inhaled deep into the lungs.

Competent Person - is an organisation or individual person who has specific knowledge and appropriate experience to undertake the works safely, this usually will come from formal or "on the job" training. They can prevent danger or injury to themselves or others.

Customer - Refers to any person who resides in a Curo owned property for which we have a duty of care.

Calorifier - an apparatus used for the transfer of heat to water in a vessel, the source of heat being contained within a pipe or coil immersed in the water.

Chlorine dioxide - a compound used as a biocide.

Cold water service - installation of plant, pipes and fitting in which cold water is stored, distributed and subsequently discharged.

Corrosion inhibitors - chemicals which protect metals either by passivating the metal by the promotion of a thin metal oxide film (anodic inhibitors), or physically forming a thin barrier film by controlled deposition (cathodic inhibitors).

Dead end/blind end - a length of pipe closed at one end through which no water passes.

Dead leg - a length of water system pipework leading to a fitting through which water only passes infrequently when there is draw off from the fitting, providing the potential for stagnation.

Disinfection - the reduction of the number of microorganisms to safe levels by either chemical or non-chemical means (e.g. biocides, heat or radiation).

Distribution circuit - pipework which distributes water from hot or cold water plant to one or more fittings/appliances.

Domestic water - hot and cold water intended for drinking, washing, cooking, food preparation or other domestic purposes.

Fouling - organic growth or other deposits on heat transfer surfaces causing loss in efficiency.

Hot water service - installation of plant, pipes and fittings in which water is heated, distributed and subsequently discharged (not including cold water feed tank or cistern).

Legionnaires' disease - a form of pneumonia caused by bacteria of the genus *Legionella*.

Legionella - is a species of harmful bacteria which thrive in moderately warm, wet conditions. It can cause fatal illness, particularly in people with a weak immune system, such as the sick, elderly or very young. It is usually contracted by inhaling water droplets.

Legionellosis - any illness caused by exposure to *Legionella*.

Mg/l (milligrams per litre) - a measure of dissolved substances given as the number of parts there are in a million parts of solvent. It is numerically equivalent to ppm (parts per million) with respect to water.

Microorganism - an organism of microscopic size, including bacteria, fungi and viruses.

Pasteurisation - heat treatment to destroy microorganisms, usually at high temperature.

Point of use (POU) filters - a filter with a maximal pore size of 0.2 μm applied at the outlet, which removes bacteria from the water flow.

Pre-Planned Maintenance (PPM) - is a periodic check carried out to communal water systems to ensure that water systems are safe.

Ppm (parts per million) a measure of dissolved substances given as the number of parts there are in a million parts of solvent. It is numerically equivalent to milligrams per litre (mg/l) with respect to water.

Procedures - Tasks and procedures to be undertaken to ensure service, maintenance and certification are completed to the required standard.

Process Map - Flowchart showing actions and works required for compliant and non-compliant aspect of each installation type.

Risk assessment - identifying and assessing the risk from Legionellosis from work activities and water sources on premises and determining any necessary precautionary measures.

Scale inhibitors - chemicals used to control scale. They function by holding up the precipitation process and/or distorting the crystal shape, thus preventing the build-up of a hard adherent scale.

Scalding - is a second or third degree burn which affects the deeper layer of skin and results in blistering resulting from contact with liquids or vapours (typically water or steam) at a high temperature.

Sessile - aquatic microorganisms adhering to a surface, normally as part of a biofilm.

Shunt pump - a circulation pump fitted to hot water service/plant to overcome the temperature stratification of the stored water.

Slime - a mucus-like exudate that covers a surface produced by some microorganisms.

Sludge - a general term for soft mud-like deposits found on heat transfer surfaces or other important sections of a cooling system. Also found at the base of calorifiers and cold water storage tanks.

Specialist Contractor - is an organisation or individual person who has specialist knowledge of certain equipment and is deemed competent by experience and suitable qualification to undertake works as per the instruction task sheets.

Stagnation - the condition where water ceases to flow and is therefore liable to microbiological growth.

Strainers - coarse filters usually positioned upstream of a sensitive component, such as a pump control valve or heat exchanger, to protect it from debris.

Thermal disinfection - heat treatment to disinfect a system.

Thermostatic mixing valve - a mixing valve in which the temperature at the outlet is pre-selected and controlled automatically by the valve.

Water Risk Assessment - is a survey carried out to record the condition and location of water systems within a building, and to identify any potential hazards arising therefrom.

Wholesome water - water supplied for such domestic purposes as cooking, drinking, food preparation or washing; or supplied to premises in which food is produced.

