

Allotment sites have a duty to comply with the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999. The objectives of the regulations are to prevent waste, misuse, undue consumption and more importantly, contamination of the public drinking water supply.

All the taps on our allotment sites are fitted with a double non-return valve to ensure a one-way flow and prevent back siphonage which could potentially cause contamination of the water supply.

Legionella bacteria are present in most soil and aquatic environments and generally causes no harm. Studies have shown that it is often present in water butts, particularly if the water is stagnant and most notably when the water temperature is between 20°c and 45°c. Deposits within the water butts and tanks such as rust, sludge, scale and organic matter can support bacterial growth and provide a source of nutrients for the bacteria.

If a hosepipe is used to extract water from a water butt or has been left with sitting water inside the hosepipe or water pipe it is possible to inhale droplets which can get into the lungs and could potentially result in Legionnaires' Disease. However, the risk significantly decreases when using a watering can.

WHAT IS LEGIONNAIRES' DISEASE?

EXAMPLES OF CONTAMINATION RISKS ON ALLOTMENTS

- Hosepipes left immersed in troughs, puddles, drains, on the ground near manure.
- Cross connection with other water sources such as rainwater or recycled water.
- Storage of water in containers with inadequate lids, vents, overflow pipes or screens.
- The use of unsuitable materials in fittings, troughs, resulting in contaminants dissolving into the water.

Legionnaires' disease is a form of bacterial pneumonia first identified in 1976. It is chiefly spread by water droplets in the air and is often associated with air conditioning.

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Whilst anyone can contract Legionnaires' Disease, over 50s, heavy smokers, people diagnosed with lung conditions and those who are immunocompromised are most at risk.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF WHEN WATERING

- Ensure that hosepipes and watering cans are emptied after use to prevent water inside heating up. Store hosepipes out of the sun.
- On hot days, run the tap for a least a minute to ensure that any water held in the system is below 20°c, keeping your face away from the spray.
- Water butts and cans should regularly be cleaned and disinfected.
- Try to avoid splashing water around when watering.
- Plot holders should clean crops and tools in a bucket of water and not in the communal water tanks under taps.
- If water has been left standing in the sun in a hosepipe or watering can, gently empty this so as not to create water droplets in the air.
- If practicable, use a watering can to avoid spray.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF ON THE PLOT

- Bacteria may be present in soil and compost so wear gloves whenever handling soil or compost.
- Do not keep bags of compost in greenhouses and sheds.
- When opening bags of compost avoid doing so in a confined space and ensure adequate ventilation.
- When opening a bag of compost do not have your head directly over the bag and fold over the top when not in use.
- Always wash your hands after gardening. Use a hand sterlising gel if soap and clean water isn't available.
- Do not drink water from hoses and standpipes.
- Consider wearing a facemask when turning compost heaps.

ALLOTMENT RULES ON WATERING

In accordance with allotment rules, tenants may not use sprinklers or other watering devices of a similar nature and shall not be permanently connected to standpipes.

Tenants are not permitted to tamper with the water supply in any way without the express permission of the Trustees.

Any leak should be promptly reported to the office.