

July 4, 2023

To All Building Owners with Cooling Towers in Simcoe County and District of Muskoka:

**Re: Controlling *Legionella* in Cooling Towers**

Last fall, the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) concluded an investigation of a Legionnaires' disease outbreak in a local community. Legionellosis can result in mild to severe respiratory illness caused by *Legionella pneumophila* bacteria. These respiratory infections occur through inhalation of aerosolized water droplets contaminated with *Legionella* bacteria.

Cooling towers are a known significant contributor to *Legionella* exposures. Aerosolized *Legionella* bacteria from cooling towers can place those living and working in surrounding areas at risk. However, the risk of *Legionella* outbreaks can be minimized by regular maintenance, cleaning, disinfection, and testing of cooling towers in accordance with best practices.

In keeping with a letter you may have received from SMDHU in December of 2022, to help reduce the risks associated with the operation of cooling towers, the SMDHU strongly recommends the following:

- Implementation of preventive maintenance, testing, and monitoring that supports a comprehensive water management program for cooling towers in accordance with the federal standard [Mechanical Design 15161-2013: Control of \*Legionella\* in Mechanical Systems](#) (“the Federal Standard”).
- Perform bacterial testing and *Legionella* testing in accordance with the Federal Standard, or more often as necessary.
- Take corrective action, for all bacterial tests based on limits and actions established in the Federal Standard.

For additional information on [Legionellosis](#) and [cooling tower maintenance](#) please visit the SMDHU website.

If you have questions regarding the above information, please do not hesitate to contact the SMDHU Safe Water team at [water@smdhu.org](mailto:water@smdhu.org).

Sincerely,

**ORIGINAL Signed By:**

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