

HSE Committee Report May 2016

The HSE Committee did not officially meet in April .However, we have attempted collectively to address members' concerns & complaints about air quality and other issues related to the construction project.

Legionella: Several Committee members have been researching Legionella and have discovered that there is a lot of conflicting information in the literature regarding risks, abatement approaches and even diagnostics. Keep in mind that Legionella bacteria are very common, especially in this area. However if you have risk factors such as a compromised immune system or chronic lung disease and develop pneumonia like symptoms, you should consider contacting your doctor and mentioning possible exposure. The testing guidelines are different for healthcare-associated pneumonia and community-acquired pneumonia. See the link at the end of the report for more information on symptoms, testing etc.

Examples of water sources that can transmit Legionella include drinking water systems (e.g. faucets or showers), hot tubs, other recreational water systems such as pools or decorative fountains and air conditioning systems that use cooling towers or other evaporative condenser mechanisms and occasionally even hospital ice machines. Legionella cannot be transmitted from person to person.

We have requested sampling results from water testing in the building. So far, we have received the results from only two sampling events:

- February (sampled on 2/22/16 and returned on 2/29/16)
- April (Received by lab on 4/13 with a “final” date of 4/20/16)

We have not received the test results conducted in early March, soon after the copper-ionization ionizing system was installed and the heat turned up to 140 degrees.

The most common species associated with Legionnaires disease is *Legionella pneumophila*, serogroup 1, which has, to our knowledge, **not** been found in the building. According to the test results we've obtained: we have ***Legionella pneumophila*, serogroup 5**. If you are concerned about exposure, you must tell your doctor what serogroup you have since testing varies according to serogroup. The following lab results are expressed as “colony forming units per milliliter of sample.”

The initial sampling in February tested hot water in four locations:

- 2nd floor men's room – **10 CFU/mL**
- 6th floor Men's room- **10 CFU/mL**
- 11th floor Men's room - **40 CFU/mL**
- 13th Floor hot water tank (not detected above the detection limit of 10 CFU/mL)

April test results of hot water:

- 2nd floor men's room (not detected above detection limit of 10 CFU/mL)
- 10th floor men's room (not detected above detection limit of 10 CFU/mL)
- Sub-basement bathroom **20 CFU/mL**

It is important to note that doctors typically order a urine test to detect Legionella.

However, a urine test will not detect *Legionella pneumophila*, serogroup 5, which is what has been found in our building. If you feel it necessary to be tested, you should request that a blood test be ordered.

The Allegheny County Department of Health has an updated publication on Legionella entitled, Updated Guidelines for the Control of Legionella in Western Pennsylvania. It can be found at:

http://www.achd.net/infectd/pubs/pdf/2014_FINAL_Legionella_Guidelines_for_Western_PA.pdf

We have received a few complaints regarding construction. They have at least temporarily stopped jackhammering and pumped in cement for a new garage roof. There have been some complaints regarding the smell and air quality associated with welding in the garage.