



Water safety: keeping out of spec under control



It is in dealing with OOS that the efficiency of your management of services really shows. You should have robust procedures for dealing with OOS (out of specification) results, which can vary from a minor temperature issue to a positive laboratory sample or, even worse, a reported case of *Legionella/Pseudomonas*.

Well managed by the Authorised Person (AP), supported by the Authorising Engineer (AE) and actioned by competent persons/contractors, the right steps can be taken to minimise risk, disruption and cost.

Most common are OOS temperatures, where the response will depend on the level of risk. If the root cause cannot be found or the risk is high, then surveillance levels need increasing. Sampling or treatment of the water with suitable biocide to reduce risk may also be recommended. For a positive lab result, actions are detailed in HTM 04-01.

Prevention

Good planning is always less expensive than reacting to problems. Budget authorisation for correcting system problems like deadlegs, that can render control measures ineffective, can only be 'won' with the knowledge and data contained in a current and truly comprehensive risk assessment. Buildings and the way they are being used change all the time, and your risk assessment must keep up.

Even given perfect infrastructure, you will rely on the communication between the various organisations and departments using the premises. Water safety groups and holistic water safety plans are already proving their effectiveness by involving system users with the installers and maintainers. Yet no system is foolproof, and a regular review of your management processes is also advisable.

Very often, it is a lack of end user understanding that causes problems, such as missed flushing of little used outlets. This is easily avoided if you have clearly-defined accountabilities and a good training plan.

Authorised Persons:

When did you last really review your risk assessment and check that your management plan is still fit for purpose?

Contact our specialist healthcare team for advice.

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