



**BS 8580 – Risk assessments for Legionella control**

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# **BS 8580**

***- adding to the regulator's tool box?***

***An Environmental Health view***

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**BS 8580 – Risk assessments for Legionella control**

# FIRST, A BIG THANK YOU.....

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- To the EHOs of my H&S Team at the City of London
- To the EHOs of various London Boroughs and other Local Authorities

who all contributed their opinions and views to this presentation



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## WHAT EHOs ARE LOOKING FOR.....

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- Risk Assessment to **IDENTIFY SIGNIFICANT RISKS**
- Written Scheme to **CONTROL** those Risks
- Periodic **AUDIT** of performance against that Written Scheme
- ACTION PLAN** to correct non-compliances
- Periodic **REVIEW** of the original Risk Assessment



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# WHAT EHOs ARE FINDING.....

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- Lack of proper process commissioning or records
- Records do not reflect true nature of system – e.g. *incomplete schematics, descriptions of system*
- Records in place, but incomplete due to all actions going unrecorded
- Inadequate or no escalation procedures;
- Records are kept, but corrective actions have not been performed or recorded as having being performed
- No preventative maintenance in place
- No, or inadequate, maintenance records
- Work not completed in a timely manner



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## WHAT EHOs ARE FINDING.....

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- ❑ Variation in the quality and scope of Risk Assessments – not all “suitable and sufficient”
- ❑ Too many are standardised which consequently miss key local risk control issues
- ❑ Some dwell too much on water treatment at the expense of other control options
- ❑ Dutyholders failure to read the Risk Assessments they have paid competent people to do
- ❑ Risk assessments not connecting sufficiently with wider management systems or controls



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# WHAT EHOs ARE FINDING.....

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- Risk Assessments producing extensive Action Plans little of which is subsequently implemented
- Local failure to carry out necessary checks set out in the Written Scheme generated by the Risk Assessment
- Improvement Notices are still being served for failure to carry out a suitable and sufficient Risk Assessment



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**SO WHAT DOES  
BS 8580 DO  
FOR EHOs?....**

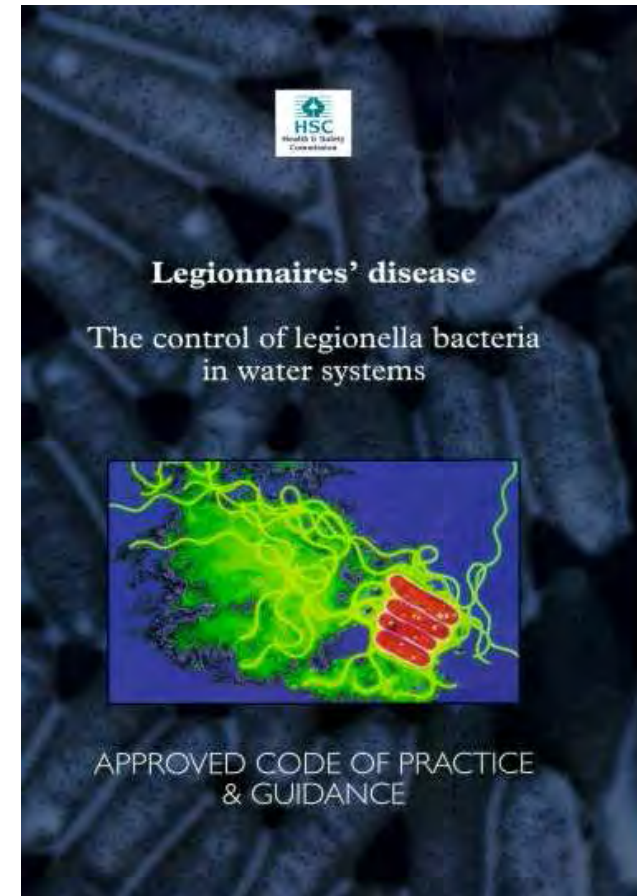


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## **L8 – DO WE NEED MORE?**

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**What's  
wrong with  
what we've  
already got  
in L8?**







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# QUESTIONS FROM EHOs?

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- Who is this standard aimed at?
- What is its purpose?
- Should not a British Standard add value to existing information and guidance:-
  - *CIBSE*
  - *BSRIA*
  - *Dept of Health*
  - *Water Management Society guidance*
- Might be dated in terms of
  - *the legislation quoted; and*
  - *details on new and emerging control methods*but isn't much of the guidance still very applicable?



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# WHAT'S GOOD ABOUT IT?

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- ❑ The BS follows the steps of an Inspector's audit process through:-
  - *Document check*
  - *Records check*
  - *Risk Assessment check*
  - *Written scheme check*
- ❑ It sets out in detail what should be looked at and what should subsequently be done
- ❑ Is a good *aide memoire* for new inspectors coming to Water Systems work for the first time.



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**BUT....**



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# COULD IT BE BETTER? IT SHOULD.....

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- ❑ Require the strengths and weaknesses of any control systems to be identified to the dutyholder
- ❑ Require clear recommendations to be made where improvements are required - for example
  - *the management structure*
  - *operational procedures*
  - *successful water treatment regimes*so as to reduce any risk gap between their current position and established “good practice”
- ❑ Give greater emphasise to
  - *its use as a basis for subsequent action*
  - *how is it used to identify, design or implement more appropriate risk control measures*



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# COULD IT BE BETTER?

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It should.....

### ❑ Amplify the Principles of Risk Assessment

- *contamination*
- *amplification*
- *transmission*
- *exposure*  
*and*
- *susceptibility*

### ❑ Suggest more detail and information on “ALARP” and even (re-)define Risk Assessment as:-

**“.....the identification and systematic consideration of the risk gaps that exist in a given situation when compared with accepted best practice”**



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# COULD IT BE BETTER?

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- ❑ It should provide more guidance on the competencies needed by risk assessors

*It currently says:*

*“The person appointed to carry out the risk assessment may be an employee of the duty holder”*

*but.....*

- ❑ Assessors are far more likely to be external contractors or consultants



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# COULD IT BE BETTER?

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- Assessors should be able to demonstrate they:-
  - *have specialist knowledge of Legionella bacteria and of the water systems to be assessed*
  - *are competent to carry out any necessary surveys and sampling*

### ISSUES STILL TO BE RESOLVED?

- Pretty much includes everyone who would currently claim to be a risk assessor!  
Not necessarily a bad thing but.....
- More examples needed of a what “good assessor” is to help the dutyholders



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# WHAT'S MISSING?

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It should say.....

- ❑ That the competency and independence of third party assessors are critical
- ❑ That risk assessments must clearly state what precautions are required to protect persons against exposure to the legionella bacteria
- ❑ That COSHH Regs' hierarchy is to eliminate or reduce risks “so far as is reasonably practicable” and should consider prevention first:-
  - *is substitution of the system for a lower risk device, such as closed chillers or air blast cooling but.....*
  - *often isn't reasonably practicable and may also conflict with current energy saving requirements*





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# WHAT'S MISSING?

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- ❑ It should advise that where prevention is not possible, then control measures must be put in place which are more than just the chemical treatment of water.
- ❑ It should promote a whole range of possible measures including:-
  - *design;*
  - *operation;*
  - *maintenance;*
  - *monitoring; and*
  - *management*and must include
  - *the provision of high efficiency drift eliminators*



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# SUMMARY – DOES BS 8580....

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- Emphasise** enough the need to identify strengths and weaknesses in any management system?
- Emphasise** enough that this is really a gap analysis?
- Include** important requirements with respect to the COSHH Regs hierarchy such as prevention?
- Suggest** a fully developed Risk Rating Scheme?
- Emphasise** enough the external origins of the vast majority of risk assessors?
- Miss** the opportunity to define and strengthen “competence of assessors”?
- Add** to the regulator’s tool box or.....
- Simply **Confuse** by being yet more authoritative guidance?