

Cooling towers after an emergency or power or water outage

Advice for operators of cooling towers following power or water outages, fires, floods or storms.

Power or water outages, fires, floods and storms can result in contamination, damage or equipment failure which may increase the potential for *Legionella* growth in cooling tower systems. Following these types of incidents, the responsible person should check (and if necessary rectify) the following as a matter of priority, to minimise potential public health issues and ensure compliance with the South Australian Public Health (Legionella) Regulations 2013 (the Legionella Regulations) before bringing the system back into operation:

Automatic biocide dosing devices

Ensure automatic biocide dosing devices and biocide dosing programs have been checked to confirm they have not been compromised. Cooling towers must not be allowed to operate if they do not have automatic dosing devices which are operating effectively.

Circulation of biocide treated water

If circulation of water treated with biocide through the entire cooling water system did not occur at least once in a 48 hour period, ensure that clause 4.7 of AS/NZS 3666.1 (commissioning of cooling towers) was complied with prior to being brought back into service. If this did not occur, an online disinfection should be undertaken as soon as possible.

System infrastructure and cleanliness

Ensure system infrastructure has been inspected for damage (particularly drift eliminators) and cleanliness and undertake remedial work and cleaning as necessary prior to the system being brought back into operation. It may be necessary to drain and refill the system if it has been heavily contaminated. Cooling towers must not be allowed to operate if they do not have compliant drift eliminators which are operating effectively.

Before bringing the system back into operation

If further advice is required before bringing the system back into operation, contact an environmental health officer at the relevant local council. All observations and actions must be recorded in the system's maintenance log books as specified in the Legionella Regulations.

For more information

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