

water

■ HYGIENE CENTRE



Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust (RCHT) improves the approach to assess the need for completing legionella risk assessment.

The Challenge

In 2013 the two-year risk assessment review frequency detailed by the HSE was removed from guidance, this meant that the RCH and their Water Safety Group [WSG] needed to re-establish how legionella risk assessments would be reviewed moving forward.

The reliance on the two-year anniversary was no longer an option and within the HSE's 'HSG274 Part 2' there are now six criteria detailing 'changes' that may affect the validity of the current legionella risk assessment, as such may invoke the need for a new risk assessment.

The Solution

To start to shape the solution, it was necessary to collate from the previous risk assessments and schematics all of the water risk systems detailed / recorded at each site. This information was then incorporated in to a 'risk assessment review tool' developed by Authorising Engineer [Water]. The format of the tool was a simple Excel spreadsheet. Within the review tool it is necessary to record the building/s at each site and the individual risk systems and quantity of assets within each building. Les Dey outlines:

"It was staggering the amount of time it took to collate all of this data [over two days] but once complete, it was only then you could appreciate the enormity of what needed to be managed"

The Results

The WSG has a broad remit to ensure water safety and compliance, with one of the requirements being to review risk assessment and make an informed decision on risk assessment need. Presenting the risk assessment review tool at WSG meetings allows the members to provide feedback on risk assessment need.

1. Making the decision on risk assessment need

The review tool is designed to be a living document that needs routine updating. Each site / building / system then needs to be checked against the six review criteria [as outlined in the 'HSG274 Part 2'] detailed at the top of the spreadsheet.

2. Monitoring action plans based on evidence of compliance

The review is completed by Operational Water Group [OWG], a sub group of the WSG. The OWG meets on a monthly basis to ensure the delivery of monitoring and action plans. As such, the various Authorised Persons [Water] [APw] for the sites / buildings can feed into the review tool with their evidence of compliance.

The Benefits

1. Risk assessment needs are now based on evidence of change having occurred and as such the entire process for acquiring risk assessments is now 'more fluid' [no pun intended!]. Instead of the entire portfolio always being assessed, it may only be individual buildings / systems.

2. Instead of risk assessments being completed every two years at considerable cost to RCHT, the cost of risk assessment is potentially significantly reduced given the review process. Risk assessments can then be commissioned based on the informed status of change.

The Outcome

As a result, RCHT has a considerably more dynamic approach to legionella risk assessments, involving the WSG and OWG, with empirical evidence of compliance, compiled by the APw with that delegated responsibility. At each WSG, the risk assessment review tool is presented using a traffic light system. Where no change has occurred against the six change criteria, the cell is coloured green and where change has occurred the cell is coloured red. The visual nature of the review ensures the WSG can now see the risk assessment status significantly clearer.

Background

RCHT is the main provider of acute and specialist care services in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, with responsibility for service provision to a population of 430,000 people [which increases with seasons] delivered across three main sites with 750 beds [approx]:

- Royal Cornwall Hospital, Truro
- West Cornwall Hospital, Penzance
- St Michael's Hospital, Hayle

"A proactive solution to managing risk assessment need was needed" Les Dey, Estates Officer and Deputy Responsible Person [Water]. *"The Trust has limited resources, so the maximising resources was also an important consideration with the solution"*

About the Trust

The Trust has three main sites covering a large geographical area and each of the sites have varying types of water systems all varying in complexity, broad range of ages [1900s, 1960s, 1980s up to the current day] and differing materials of construction.

Across the three sites there are three different control strategies employed spanning more than 250 individual risk systems. With the domestic hot water there are over 130 separate generators varying in size from point of use water heaters through to calorifier and load levellers. With the cold water there are over 60 separate cisterns again with varying sizes and ages! Numerous distribution circuits with outlets with thermostatic mixing valves and showers. Including various types of other risk systems such as a hydrotherapy pool, air handling units, softened water systems and RO systems!