

Dear Colleagues,

We have heard concerns from some of you following the publication of a local news story about the number of cases of Legionnaires' disease reported across San Diego County this year. That story may have inadvertently created confusion among staff because it also mentioned the ongoing remediation at the Mission Valley state building. **We want to clarify that no new confirmed cases of Legionnaires' disease have been reported as possibly connected to the building beyond the single case reported earlier this year, and no known deaths have been associated with this building.** Additionally, the strain found in environmental water testing at the building is not the same strain that causes 90% of Legionella infections in people.

As we noted last week, finding some remaining *Legionella* in the water system after the start of remediation is not surprising. It sometimes takes several rounds of flushing and disinfection to reduce levels. *Legionella* are naturally occurring in the environment and some *Legionella* may be detected during water testing, even if prevention and remediation steps have recently occurred. However, to ensure that the water system is well-controlled and safe for use, routine testing and building response to test results are conducted.

A state contractor conducted remediation activities in the building, including flushing, disinfecting, and installing filters on all sink fixtures and showers. Subsequent testing conducted in May shows that while the Legionella levels are still detectable in some building locations, overall Legionella levels in the building's water remain low enough that the building is safe for people to occupy and work in it. In an abundance of caution the contractor instituted remediation measures above and beyond what's typically done for office buildings (as opposed to healthcare buildings). This includes periodic flushing and the use of filters, both of which greatly reduce the risk of exposure to Legionella bacteria. Additional remediation and retesting are ongoing to further reduce risk. A [summary of post-remediation testing results](#) has recently been posted on the DGS Legionella website. Below is an excerpt:

“Hyperchlorination along with flushing of the building water system and installation of in-line filters was effective in significantly reducing, though not eliminating, the *Legionella* levels in the water system. Localized contamination of *Legionella* was present in a few fixtures and cleaning and/or replacement of identified fixtures was conducted to remediate the localized *Legionella* in those fixtures. In-line filters should remain on fixtures until a comprehensive Water Management plan (utilizing CDC, AIHA and ASHRAE guidelines) is in place and on-going routine water

testing confirms *Legionella* is well-controlled (<1 CFU/mL) based on [CDC established guidelines](#).”

**At this time, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has assessed the risk of illness at the building to be low for most individuals.** According to CDPH, some individuals may be at higher risk for Legionnaires’ disease, including those who are age 50 or older, current or former smokers, and people who have chronic lung disease, immune system disorders, cancer or other underlying illnesses. It is important to note that even among people at higher risk, *Legionella* disease infection is rare – and most people exposed to *Legionella* do not get sick. If you are at higher risk for Legionnaires’ disease, you may consult with your supervisor as to whether a reasonable accommodation is necessary to address those needs.

**We value you and your health, and we understand this situation can be stressful and frustrating.** We want to remind you of the free and confidential services available through the [Employee Assistance Program](#) (EAP), if needed.

We commit to transparent and frequent communication to ensure that you have all the information available. As a reminder, we have established a [website](#) that includes various resources, including frequently asked questions. If you have additional questions or concerns, please don’t hesitate to contact us by email at [SDMissionValleyBuilding@dgs.ca.gov](mailto:SDMissionValleyBuilding@dgs.ca.gov).

In partnership,  
California Department of General Services and California Department of Public Health