

What is ASHRAE-188?

In June 2015, ASHRAE released Standard 188 – “**Legionellosis: Risk Management for Building Water Systems**” a guideline to prevent and mitigate the emergence of Legionellosis. The standard does not provide a large amount of guidance around water treatment strategies or testing limits and ASHRAE does not monitor the implementation of any of its standards. Compliance is under the review of agencies that ensure the safety of building occupants, such as OSHA for commercial buildings and The Joint Commission for healthcare facilities. This document provides an overview of the standard and is not meant to replace doing a thorough review.

Legionellosis outbreaks are commonly associated with buildings or structures that have complex water systems like hotels, long-term care facilities and hospitals.

“The purpose of this proposed standard is to present practices for the prevention of Legionellosis associated with centralized industrial and commercial building water systems.” *ASHRAE 188*

ASHRAE 188-2015	
PURPOSE	Minimum requirements of a legionellosis risk mitigation program.
SCOPE	Develop and implement a risk management plan called a Water Management Program (WMP).
ELEMENTS OF A WATER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM	• Establish a team • Describe water systems and develop schematics. • Perform hazard analysis of building water systems • Determine where control measures need to be applied and maintained • Monitor and take corrective actions • Confirm the plan is implemented as designed and it effectively controls hazardous conditions • Document and communicate all activities of the program
WMP TEAM	Non-Healthcare: teams may include any combination of building employees, suppliers or risk consultants. Healthcare: teams must include senior organizational leadership, facility maintenance and infection control. Any concerned stakeholders may also be included.
VALIDATION	Testing for Legionella and monitoring for legionellosis

Buildings characterized to have one or more factors relating to legionellosis:

The following types of buildings are specified in ASHRAE 188-2015 as having potable water systems with a higher risk factor and require a WMP:

- Multiple housing units with a centralized hot water system
- More than 10 stories
- Healthcare facilities where patient stays exceed 24 hours
- Occupants that have compromised immune systems
- Occupants over the age of 65

What devices are considered high-risk?

Water systems in the buildings listed above have the potential to generate mists and harbor Legionella. Any potable water distribution networks and point of use devices such as ice machines, shower heads, tap faucets and any mist generating devices need to be documented in a Water Management Plan (WMP). Swimming pools are not noted in ASHRAE 188-2015 unless they are associated with a healthcare facility. All buildings with cooling towers, evaporative condensers, decorative fountains, misters, air washers, humidifiers, or atomizers must include these devices in the WMP. The WMP must include a written procedure for each device that details how it is to be commissioned, maintained, shutdown and remediated in the event that Legionella contamination is found.

Developing a Water Management Plan

Developing a WMP can feel overwhelming. It is important to have a plan that is comprehensive, yet simple enough to ensure it is easy to follow and implement. If your building meets any of the above criteria you will want to review the full ASHRAE 188-2015 Standard. The Standard can be purchased and downloaded or mailed to you by going to the ASHRAE Bookstore at ashrae.org.

After reviewing ASHRAE 188-2015, you can begin to establish a team and define your WMP. After you have documented all of the potential risk areas that could harbor Legionella, your team will perform regular analysis, testing and correction. Watertech believes that the most effective way to validate a WMP is to test for Legionella bacteria with the goal of none detected. A WMP is a continuous cycle of re-evaluation. This constant vigilance is extremely effective to help ensure the safety of building occupants.

Watertech, Your Water Management Leader

For more information about developing a Water Management Program, call Watertech of America. Watertech has worked with facilities for over 35 years to help minimize risk and improve water safety. At Watertech, our goal is to protect your bottom line while making water safety a top priority.



This is a simplified overview on ASHRAE-188. If you would like an analysis of your facility or to discuss a site-specific Water Management Program, call us:

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