

# Strategy for ASHRAE Member Engagement to Promote ANSI/ASHRAE Standard 188-2015 – *Legionellosis: Risk Management for Building Water Systems*

In June 2015, ASHRAE released ANSI/ASHRAE Standard 188-2015 – *Legionellosis: Risk Management for Building Water Systems*. This new standard was ten years in development and was created with the research of engineers, public health officials, representatives of the Federal government and other industries.

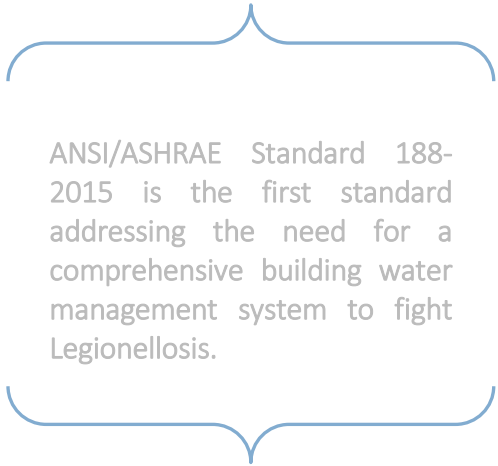
Legionellosis refers to two distinct clinical illnesses. When the bacterium, *Legionella*, causes pneumonia, it is called Legionnaires' Disease. The bacteria can also cause a less-severe influenza-like illness known as "Pontiac Fever." Most cases of legionellosis are the result of exposure to *Legionella* associated with building water systems. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimate there are 10,000 cases of Legionnaires' Disease in the United States alone.<sup>1</sup> While Legionnaire's Disease has been known for many years, recent outbreaks have increased awareness of the disease, its causes and prevention strategies. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), since many countries lack appropriate methods of diagnosing the infection or sufficient surveillance systems, the rate of occurrence is unknown. In Europe, Australia and the United States, there are about 10-15 cases detected per million population. In Canada, the average number of reported cases of Legionnaires' disease is generally less than 100 per year. However the actual number of cases is thought to be much higher, as many people with pneumonia may not be tested for infection with *Legionella*.

Immediately after this new standard was released, the City of New York experienced an outbreak of the disease linked directly to cooling towers in the City. The CDC and the City estimate that 128 individuals contracted the disease and 12 of those people died. Similarly in Flint, MI, a city already in crisis due to high lead content in its drinking water, 87 residents were diagnosed with the disease between June 2015 and November 2015 with ten deaths.<sup>2</sup>

## Standard 188: An Opportunity and Challenge for ASHRAE's Technical Expertise and Grassroots Members

These recent, very public outbreaks of legionella, coupled with the CDC and WHO estimates on the occurrence of legionella around the world, provide ASHRAE members with a unique opportunity to help at the local level. ASHRAE members can use this technical expertise to:

- Engage Federal, State and local health officials in an education and outreach effort to combat the bacterium
- Create ongoing connections between ASHRAE Chapters and Federal, State and local elected and appointed officials
- Provide a focused effort in local Chapters in support of a particular program/goal that is popular and attainable



ANSI/ASHRAE Standard 188-2015 is the first standard addressing the need for a comprehensive building water management system to fight Legionellosis.

## Goals and Specific Actions

As part of an effort to create networks necessary to promote ASHRAE standards, products and services, all ASHRAE Chapters are encouraged to meet with officials from their local and State health departments, as well as those from Federal program regional offices at least once per Society Year. Inviting such officials to speak at Chapter and/or CRC meetings can provide the greatest number of networking and learning opportunities. As programs are implemented, relationships developed, and feedback sought, contact can be expected to increase. Identify and meet with members of legislative bodies (e.g.: State legislatures, municipal governments) who have an active interest in public health and safety. Determine if any Chapter members have personal and/or professional relationships with these elected and appointed officials.

Many local, State, and Federal programs will hold public hearings or meetings at which proposed activities are discussed. Chapter members should identify one person and an alternate who participates at these meetings and reports back to the Chapter. The Chapter may find that their Government Affairs Committee Chair is an appropriate person to fill this role.

Chapters should highlight their engagement with public health officials in their newsletters, social media outlets, CRCs, and elsewhere to demonstrate their value, strengthen relationships, and inspire others to participate in the highlighted or similar activities.

Chapters should be sure to claim PAOE points for these activities, as many are likely eligible.

### Action Steps:

- Obtain support/endorsement from Society-level GAC (and BOD ExCom if needed)
- Solicit RVC effort to promote with Chapter Presidents and GAC Chairs
- Create targeted interactive communications for Chapters to use with Federal, State, and municipal health officials
  - Sample letters
  - Invitations to health officials to speak at Chapter meetings
  - Materials directly related to ASHRAE support of legionella treatment and prevention programs
- This campaign should utilize all of GAC's social media outlets for promotion
- Develop a suggested timeline Chapters can use to aid with implementation

### Frequently Asked Questions:

#### 1. Where can I find other resources on legionellosis?

A number of resources are available including:

ASHRAE Standard 188-2015, *Legionellosis: Risk Management for Building Water Systems*  
[www.ashrae.org/standard188](http://www.ashrae.org/standard188)

ASHRAE Guideline 12-2000, *Minimizing the Risk of Legionellosis Associated with Building Water Systems*  
[http://www.techstreet.com/ashrae/standards/guideline-12-2000-minimizing-the-risk-of-legionellosis-associated-with-building-water-systems?product\\_id=232891](http://www.techstreet.com/ashrae/standards/guideline-12-2000-minimizing-the-risk-of-legionellosis-associated-with-building-water-systems?product_id=232891)

ASHRAE Journal article [http://bookstore.ashrae.biz/journal/journal\\_s\\_article.php?articleID=1686](http://bookstore.ashrae.biz/journal/journal_s_article.php?articleID=1686)

Articles and papers addressing legionella available in ASHRAE Bookstore

<http://www.techstreet.com/ashrae/searches/13580419>

Guidance from the Centers for Disease Control <http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/legionnaires/>

Proposed Standard from NSF and ASHRAE

<http://www.nsf.org/newsroom/nsf-international-and-ashrae-sign-agreement-to-advance-knowledge-of-buildin>

**2. What can I say in my meetings with Federal, State, and Municipal Legislators and Health Department Officials? Can I speak for ASHRAE?**

Lobbying laws differ from State to State, so your Chapter GAC Chair should definitely be familiar with each States' definitions and requirements. That said, because ASHRAE's members are volunteers and engagement with government officials is focused on education and technical assistance, engaging in government affairs by ASHRAE's Chapters and members is strongly encouraged. The ASHRAE GAC webpage provides a link to lobbying laws in all 50 States. Go to: <https://www.ashrae.org/government-affairs/grassroots-government-advocacy>.

ASHRAE Chapters and members can "speak" for the Society to government officials inasmuch as they adhere strictly to established ASHRAE policy, positions, and official documents. If you ever have questions, contact Alice Yates, Jim Scarborough or Jeremy Pollack in ASHRAE's Government Affairs Office at [GovAffairs@ashrae.org](mailto:GovAffairs@ashrae.org) or 202-833-1830.

1. ANSI/ASHRAE Standard 188-2015 – Legionellosis: Risk Management for Building Water Systems
2. It should be noted that these deaths, while at the same time as the city's water crisis, have not been directly attributed to the lead content in the water.