

# Clinician Alert – Legionella Cluster



## SAFETY NOTICE 028/25

Issue date:	28 December 2025
Content reviewed by:	Health Protection NSW
Distributed to:	Chief Executives; Directors of Clinical Governance; Director, Regulation and Compliance Unit
KEY MESSAGE:	<p>A cluster of 3 patients with <i>Legionella pneumophila</i> infection has been identified. Cases spent time near Clarence Street in Sydney CBD during their incubation period.</p> <p>Clinicians should be alert for patients with symptoms consistent with <i>Legionella pneumophila</i> infection, request specific testing on suspected cases, and report suspected cases to the local public health unit.</p>
ACTION REQUIRED BY:	Clinicians
REQUIRED ACTION:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Distribute this Safety Notice to all relevant clinicians and clinical departments for awareness.</li><li>2. Include this Safety Information in relevant handovers and safety huddles</li><li>3. Notify your local public health unit of any suspected case.</li></ol>
DEADLINE:	N/A
We recommend you also inform:	Directors, Managers and Staff of: Emergency departments, Intensive care, Infectious Diseases, Respiratory Physicians, General medicine, Geriatrics, Nursing, Pathology Services.
Website:	<a href="https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/sabs/Pages/default.aspx">https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/sabs/Pages/default.aspx</a> <a href="http://internal.health.nsw.gov.au/quality/sabs/index.html">http://internal.health.nsw.gov.au/quality/sabs/index.html</a>
Review date:	February 2026

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**N** SN: 028/25

## Situation

There is a cluster of 3 patients with *Legionella pneumophila* serogroup 1 infection. The patients had symptom onsets between 19 December to 23 December 2025.

The 3 patients visited Sydney CBD near Clarence Street during their incubation period.

No single source for the cases has been identified, and it is possible that they are unrelated. An investigation of potential sources in the area is underway.

## Background

*Legionella pneumophila* bacteria can contaminate air conditioning cooling towers (located on top of buildings), whirlpool spas, shower heads and other bodies of water. People may be exposed if they inhale aerosolized contaminated water. Contaminated cooling towers can cause large outbreaks of Legionnaires disease.

The typical incubation period is 2 to 10 days, but more commonly 5 to 6 days.

Symptoms usually include fever, chills, cough, and dyspnoea. Cases may also have muscle aches, headache, fatigue, loss of appetite and diarrhoea.

## Assessment

It can be difficult to distinguish *Legionella pneumophila* infection from other types of pneumonia by symptoms alone.

Cases may be critically unwell with pneumonia. Most people recover but the disease is occasionally fatal, particularly when it occurs with co-morbidities or immune suppression.

## Recommendations

Consider *Legionella pneumophila* in patients with consistent symptoms, especially those who have travelled to the Sydney CBD in the 10 days prior to symptom onset.

In patients presenting with clinically consistent disease consider the following investigations:

- urine for *Legionella* urinary antigen testing
- sputum (including induced sputum or bronchial washings) for *Legionella* culture and PCR

Note: Sputum culture should always be collected if possible, to enable matching of any isolates with environmental samples.

Please notify your local public health unit of any suspected case.

Under the Public Health Act 2010, hospital chief executives and laboratories are required to notify their Public Health Unit (PHU) as soon as possible via phone when they have a positive result or reasonable clinical suspicion that a patient has a *Legionella* infection.

Timely notification helps NSW Health prevent outbreaks, respond to emerging health threats, and protect the community.

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**N** SN: 028/24

## Further information

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/legionnaires/Pages/default.aspx>