



Manningtree: Sports centre legionella bacteria scare

1:41pm Friday 3rd July 2009

CHANGING rooms at a sports centre have been shut after a potentially fatal bacteria was found in part of the water the system.

A low level of legionella bacteria, which can cause Legionnaires' disease, was discovered in one of the two water tanks at Manningtree Sports Centre, based at Manningtree High School during a routine check.

Tendring Council, which runs the centre jointly with the high school, has now closed the changing rooms served by the water tank.

In 2005 legionella bacteria was found at Frinton and Walton Swimming Pool after a man from London who had visited the site was found to have the disease.

Just weeks later showers at Clacton Leisure Centre were closed after a further discovery of the bacteria.

This week a reading of 400 colony forming units (cfu) per litre of the bacteria was found in a water sample taken at the Manningtree centre.

Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance recommends where one or two samples contain levels between 100 to 1,000 cfu per litre resampling should be carried out.

Then procedure says if a similar count is detected a review of control measures should then be carried out.

But the council has shut the changing rooms and is set to bring forward chlorination of the hot and cold water systems, flushing through and retesting.

Stephen Mayzes, Tendring's cabinet member for Leisure, said the council had a duty of care to its customers and staff.

He said: "While we did not have to go as far as we have under the HSE guidelines, and the level of the bacteria is relatively low, a decision was rightly made to take immediate action.

"Only one of the water tanks is affected and therefore the changing rooms served by that tank have been closed for about one to two weeks while the work is undertaken.

"The health and wellbeing of all our customers must always come first."

He added: "Because there is another tank, which is unaffected, customers will be able to access other changing rooms and showers and the centre will remain open."

The discovery of the bacteria was made as part of a planned preventative maintenance programme, which includes a scheme to maintain the hot and cold water systems.

Lynda McWilliams, Tendring's cabinet member for the environment, said she was pleased the inspection system put in place by the council some time ago had paid dividends.

"It has detected these issues early and these matters have been addressed immediately," she said.

"Without these procedures in place this discovery would not have been made when it was, and we would not have known that it needed to be dealt with at this time.

"By making these checks on a regular basis we have picked it up quickly."

The decision to close the changing rooms was made in consultation with Manningtree High School.

Deborah Hollister, headteacher, said: "Parents, students, staff and governors have all been advised of the situation and we will work with Tendring Council to resolve the matter as soon as possible."

[Back](#)