



The Scottish  
Government

CEL 08 (2013)

3 May 2013

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Dear Colleague

### Water sources and potential infection risk to patients in high risk units – revised guidance

In [CEL 2012\(03\)](#) we advised of potential infection risks posed by water systems in healthcare facilities and actions required to minimise those risks. This letter replaces CEL 2012 (03).

Since February 2012 substantial further evidence has been gained on potential risks to patients, along with consideration of possible unintended consequences. Revised guidance is accordingly now being issued.

Revised parts A and B of *Scottish Health Technical Memorandum 04-01: Water safety for healthcare premises* (SHTM-04-01) are [available](#).

National Services Scotland *Guidance for neonatal units (NNUs) (levels 1,2,3), adult and paediatric intensive care units (ICUs) in Scotland to minimise the risk of Pseudomonas aeruginosa infection from water* [is available](#).

Boards must ensure that:

- all high risk units where patients may be at increased risk of pseudomonas and related infections are identified and control measures applied
- best practice relating to the use of hand washing facilities is consistently and fully applied
- all taps in all clinical areas in high risk units (manually or automatically) are flushed daily (and a record kept) to minimise the risk of pseudomonal contamination. Flushing should be for a period of **one minute**, first thing in the morning, at the maximum flow rate that does not give rise to any splashing beyond the basin
- domestic staff have been trained in the correct decontamination procedures for sinks, basins and taps in ICUs and neonatal units to minimise the risk of pseudomonas
- they have established a system of clear governance with accountability to the appropriate Executive Director
- they are compliant with revised SHTM-04-01

For action

Board Chief Executives  
Directors of  
Estates/Facilities  
HAI Executive Leads  
Infection Control  
Managers  
Infection Control Doctors

For information

Directors Nursing  
Medical Directors  
Directors Public Health  
CsPHM (Health  
Protection)  
HAI Task Force  
Health Protection  
Scotland  
Health Facilities Scotland  
Strategic Facilities Group

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Policy Issues

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It is the intention that the Board Water Safety Group will provide an assurance annually to the NHS Board on compliance with the requirement of this CEL through the Board's annual Controls Assurance process. Accordingly, NHS Boards should report annually confirming compliance or, where compliance has not been met, a plan and timescale for achieving compliance.

Further advice may be obtained from National Services Scotland, Health Facilities Scotland (HFS), who should be specifically consulted in relation to new build projects.

As further evidence accrues updates may be issued by NSS.

Yours sincerely

**Harry Burns**

**Derek Feeley**

**SIR HARRY BURNS**  
Chief Medical Officer

**DEREK FEELEY**  
Director General

## References

[Independent review of incidents of \*Pseudomonas aeruginosa\* infection in neonatal units in Northern Ireland - Interim report.](#) The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority, March 2012

[Independent review of incidents of \*Pseudomonas aeruginosa\* infection in neonatal units in Northern Ireland - Final report.](#) The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority, May 2012

[National Infection Prevention and Control Manual \(Chapter 1 - Standard Infection Control Precautions\).](#) Health Protection Scotland January 2012