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U.S. Department Of Transportation
Maritime Administration

U.S. Merchant Marine Academy
Department of Public Safety

29 Oct 2024

To the Kings Point Community,

This morning, an external contractor, hired by the Academy to conduct water sampling and testing of water outlets in Palmer Hall, notified Academy officials that legionella bacteria had been detected in the facility.

On 16 October, 2024, the contractor took twenty-three water samples from different water sources throughout Palmer Hall; five of the samples returned a positive result for legionella bacteria. Upon notification of the positive results, Academy personnel shut off the water supply to the affected locations.

Mitigation measures are already underway and include replacing fixtures, replacing components of specific outlets, and flushing and treating portions of the distribution system. Water coolers have been taken offline and users will be directed to alternative water sources. Additionally, Academy leadership has directed similar testing across all Academy facilities. Should any samples return a positive result, you will be promptly notified and mitigation efforts will begin immediately.

The Academy is also in contact with our water provider for further recommendations on eliminating legionella in domestic water outlets. Confirmation testing will begin after all mitigation measures are completed. As with previous instances of legionella detection, we will continue to keep the community updated on remediation and testing results.

General Legionella Information:

Common sources of infection are often associated with large or complex water sources such as cooling towers, decorative fountains, hot tubs, water used for showering, and lakes and streams. After Legionella grows and multiplies in a water system, it can spread via droplets (aerosolization), small enough for people to breath in. Breathing in Legionella can lead to people contracting Legionnaires' disease. Those at increased risk are adults 50 years or older, current or former smokers, and people with a weakened immune system. In 2018, nearly 10,000 cases of Legionnaires' disease were reported in the United States.

Symptoms of Legionnaires disease may include coughing, shortness of breath, muscle aches, headache, and fever. If you have worked or been present in Palmer Hall, and develop these symptoms, you should contact your health care provider and mention that you may have been exposed to Legionella. Additionally, we recommend you report your status to your supervisor at the Academy.

Summary:

The Public Works Office and responsible maintenance contractor is following recommended industry standards for responding to a positive legionella sample.

There is currently no evidence nor suspicion that other water sources (drinking, cleaning or air conditioning) have any issues. Should any additional testing conducted show otherwise, you will be notified immediately.

USMMA will conduct additional sampling to verify that decontamination efforts have been successful and returned to normal operating conditions.

We value your continued support and thank you in advance for your patience. Below are links for additional information. Please contact the undersigned to address questions or concerns.

<https://www.cdc.gov/legionella/causes/index.html>

https://www.cdc.gov/drinking-water/prevention/preventing-waterborne-germs-at-home.html?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/drinking/preventing-waterborne-germs-at-home.html

Sincerely,

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