



21 August 2024

To the USMMA Community,

This correspondence is to provide additional information the Legionella bacteria that was detected in the Fulton Gibbs cooling tower on Thursday, 01 August, 2024. As a precautionary measure, the Academy contracted an outside vendor to conduct water sampling inside of Fulton Gibbs to ensure that cross contamination did not occur. The contractor took twenty water samples from various locations within Fulton Gibbs. The Academy received the results of the water samples yesterday and all of the tests came back with a reading of “not detected” for Legionella bacteria. The cooling tower water was sampled and tested on Monday, 05 August after being treated twice, the results of these tests show increased levels of Legionella bacteria from what the original test indicated. **It is important to note, that while the bacteria level has increased, it is still well below NY state and CDC reporting requirements.** Academy representatives have met with the maintenance contractor and subcontractors to discuss a path forward for cleaning and eliminating the bacteria. As a precaution, the Fulton Gibbs cooling tower and the air handling system are being shut down to prevent bacteria from entering the facility. We will keep the community updated on the results of the remediation and further testing.

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 Fulton Gibbs 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: Although Legionella bacteria was discovered in the cooling system of Fulton Gibbs, there have not been any reports of adverse health effects from staff or visitors. Reported levels of the bacteria are below mandated reporting requirements.

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

As precautionary measures, the Academy staff 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 consideration. Please contact the undersigned to address questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Jeffery M. Thomas
Director of Public Safety
(516) 726.5846
thomasj@usmma.edu