

## **Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport Water Tests Detect Legionella**

### **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

#### **General Information**

##### **Q: What prompted the water testing at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport?**

A: Testing was conducted in late June as part of the General Service Administration (GSA) Unilateral Amendment for TSA leased space. This was done as part of GSA's national campaign to evaluate water quality in TSA-leased spaces across various airports. This included testing for lead, copper, E. coli, and Legionella bacteria.

##### **Q: What were the findings of the water testing?**

A: The testing revealed the presence of Legionella bacteria in nine out of fourteen tested sites, including two publicly accessible water fountains. One site also exhibited copper levels exceeding the EPA standard.

##### **Q: Which locations were affected?**

TSA breakrooms in Terminals 3 and 4 as well as two post-security public water fountains in Terminal 3.

#### **Health Information**

##### **Q: What is Legionella and how does it affect health?**

A: According to the Maricopa County Public Health Department, drinking water containing Legionella is not a risk, and there is no immediate threat to public health posed by its presence in drinking water. There is no health standard for Legionella in drinking water. Legionella bacteria are common in water systems and can cause Legionnaires' disease if inhaled through aerosolized water droplets. Symptoms of Legionnaires' disease include cough, shortness of breath, fever, muscle aches, and headaches.

##### **Q: How is Legionnaires' disease contracted?**

A: Legionnaires' disease is contracted by inhaling small water droplets containing Legionella bacteria. It is not transmitted from person to person. It is not spread by drinking water.

##### **Q: Are there any known cases of Legionnaires' disease linked to PHX?**

A: According to the County Public Health Department, there are currently no known cases of Legionnaires' disease linked to PHX.

##### **Q: What are the health risks associated with elevated copper levels in water?**

A: Elevated copper levels can cause gastrointestinal distress if consumed in large quantities over time. Long-term exposure may lead to liver or kidney damage. Symptoms of copper exposure include stomach pain, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.

#### **Immediate Actions Taken**

##### **Q: What immediate actions were taken following the detection of Legionella and copper?**

A: The following actions were taken:

- **Isolation and Bottled Water:** Out of an abundance of caution, water was immediately shut off to the impacted areas. Water remains off in those areas, and bottled water is being provided to employees for their convenience.
- **Flushing and Retesting:** Comprehensive flushing and retesting of water systems were initiated.
- **Faucet Replacement:** Faucets in affected areas were replaced as a precautionary measure.

**Q: Who is involved in addressing the issue?**

A: PHX is working with leading water quality experts with the city of Phoenix, Maricopa County Public Health Department, and contracted experts to ensure effective treatment and long-term management of the airport's water systems.

**Ongoing and Future Measures**

**Q: What steps are being taken to ensure future water safety?**

A: The following measures are being implemented:

- **Continued Flushing and Testing:** Systematic flushing and testing of water systems will continue.
- **Comprehensive Water Management Program:** Engaging a consulting firm to provide contracted expertise and help in continuing to ensure water quality at all airport facilities.

**Additional Resources**

**Q: Where can I find more information about Legionella and copper in water?**

A: For more detailed information, please refer to the following resources:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) - Legionella: [CDC Legionella Information](#)
- National Library of Medicine - National Institutes of Health - Copper in Drinking Water: [NIH Copper in Drinking Water Information](#)

**Q: Who can be contacted for more information?**

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