

NEW FINDINGS: Authorities confirm source of Legionnaires' at Sheraton Atlanta

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NEWS

14 hours ago

By

Helena Oliviero

A Legionnaires' outbreak that has sickened possibly dozens of people started at the Sheraton Atlanta, the Georgia Department of Public Health confirmed Thursday, saying test results indicated Legionella bacteria in the hotel's cooling tower and in a decorative fountain in the atrium.

The public health department said the entire hotel water distribution system has undergone remediation.

The Sheraton Atlanta was cleared to reopen after an inspection of the hotel by the Fulton County Board of Health on Thursday, though sampling and testing will continue at the hotel, according to the state health department.



The hotel shut down voluntarily on July 15 after three people who stayed at or visited the hotel reported that they had been diagnosed with the Legionnaires' disease, a severe form of pneumonia. Since then, state health authorities have confirmed 13 cases of the infection and say there are 66 probable cases. One death also has been attributed to complications from the bacteria that causes the respiratory ailment.

A metro Atlanta photographer filed a lawsuit Monday against the Sheraton Atlanta, saying the hotel's "negligence in the operation and maintenance of the water systems" caused him and others to become ill with Legionnaires' disease.

The lawsuit — which names the Arden Group and Arepii Sa Hotel, companies that own and manage the Sheraton Atlanta, and hotel general manager Ken Peduzzi as defendants — accuses the hotel of failing to either adopt or follow a water management plan to prevent the spread of the Legionella bacteria.

Most people get sick because they breathe in water droplets contaminated with bacteria found lurking in cooling towers, hot water tanks and condensers in large air-conditioning units. Pools and hot tubs also are sometimes sources of the disease. It is not spread by person-to-person contact.

MORE: [What is Legionnaires' disease? FAQs about the severe form of pneumonia](#)

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Legionnaires' disease outbreak at Atlanta hotel leaves 1 dead, state health officials say

 [msn.com/en-us/health/health-news/legionnaires-disease-outbreak-at-atlanta-hotel-leaves-1-dead-state-health-officials-say/ar-AAFtoJ0](https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/health-news/legionnaires-disease-outbreak-at-atlanta-hotel-leaves-1-dead-state-health-officials-say/ar-AAFtoJ0)
Madeline Parber

One person has died from a Legionnaires' disease outbreak at the Sheraton Atlanta Hotel.

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Nancy Nydam, director of communications at the Georgia Department of Public Health, confirmed the death to Fox News on Wednesday. The person's name has not been released due to privacy laws.

"There are 12 lab-confirmed cases of Legionnaires' disease, including one death, and 61 probable cases," as of Wednesday, she added. The source of the outbreak, which affected guests who visited or stayed at the hotel between June 12 and July 15, has not yet been identified. The hotel voluntarily closed as a result of the outbreak and will remain so "until the source of the Legionella is located and remediation is complete," state health officials said in a statement.

"Legionnaires' disease is a 'severe form of pneumonia,'" according to the Mayo Clinic, which explains pneumonia as an inflammation of the lung that is typically caused by an infection.

"You can't catch Legionnaires' disease from person-to-person contact. Instead, most people get Legionnaires' disease from inhaling the bacteria," the Mayo Clinic states, noting that older adults, those who smoke, or those with "weakened immune systems" are the most susceptible.

Legionella pneumophila, a bacterium, is usually the cause of the illness. It can be found in soil and water, but more commonly causes infection when it multiplies in water systems (e.g., hot tubs and air conditioners).

The disease is treatable with antibiotics, and those who are sickened typically recover in full. Symptoms often include fever, chills, cough, and shortness of breath, according to the Georgia Department of Public Health.

Last year, Georgia saw 189 cases of Legionnaires' disease, The New York Times reports.

55 'probable' Legionnaires' cases tied to Atlanta hotel

abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/55-probable-legionnaires-cases-tied-atlanta-hotel-64648842



The Georgia Department of Public Health says it's probable there are 55 more cases in the Legionnaires' disease outbreak linked to the Sheraton Atlanta Hotel.

News outlets report the agency hadn't confirmed the cases in the lab Monday but the people involved have illnesses consistent with Legionnaires' disease, such as pneumonia. There are 11 confirmed cases but health officials can't be sure the hotel is the source until testing is complete.

The Sheraton Atlanta shut down voluntarily about two weeks ago after three guests tested positive for the disease. The hotel will remain close until August 11, depending on test results.

Legionnaire's disease is a type of pneumonia caused by inhaling the water-borne bacteria Legionella. Symptoms include fever, fatigue, headache, and coughing.

The investigation is ongoing. No deaths have been reported.

Atlanta Legionnaires' disease: 9 former hotel guests are now infected

 [msn.com/en-us/health/health-news/atlanta-legionnaires-disease-9-former-hotel-guests-are-now-infected/ar-AAEK7k4](https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/health-news/atlanta-legionnaires-disease-9-former-hotel-guests-are-now-infected/ar-AAEK7k4)

By Susan Scutti, CNN

Nine former guests at a prominent Atlanta hotel have now been diagnosed with Legionnaires' disease, but medical investigators have not yet found the exact source of the bacterial infection, officials said.

"Based on epidemiological evidence we have an outbreak among people who stayed at the [Sheraton Atlanta] during the same time period," said Nancy Nydam, director of communications at Georgia Department of Public Health.

Nydam said Tuesday that all nine cases of Legionnaires' disease have been confirmed by testing. No deaths have been reported.

Legionnaires' is a serious form of pneumonia that is noncontagious. Guests who complained of lung problems and were later diagnosed with Legionnaires' had attended a convention at the Atlanta hotel a couple of weeks ago.

The bacterium causing Legionnaires' has not been confirmed at the hotel, which has hired outside experts to conduct testing.

The hotel has voluntarily closed down until the source is found and the problem is fixed, Nydam said. More than 400 guests have been relocated to nearby hotels, CNN affiliate WSB-TV reported last week.

Thousands infected each year

About one in 10 people who get sick from Legionnaires' disease will die, a recent government report found.

The disease infects an estimated 10,000 to 18,000 people in the United States each year. People can get sick when they breathe in mist or accidentally take water into their lungs containing the bacteria. It can be treated with antibiotics, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The hotel's general manager, Ken Peduzzi, said that immediately after being notified of a possible bacterial contamination, "the hotel retained outside environmental consultants and is presently collecting samples." The state health department, the Fulton County Board of Health and environmental specialists are working with the hotel to test for the bacteria.

"At this time it remains unknown if the source of the exposure is located within the hotel. Samples will be collected from various areas of the hotel, including the pool, hot tub, fountain, and chillers," said Peduzzi on Friday.

"This is the typical way these situations are handled since the assessment and testing can be complicated," according to Nydam. The state health department and other agencies will work with them on the next steps in the investigation (technical assessment, sampling plan and submission)," she added.

In addition to relocating current guests to nearby hotels, the Sheraton is also reaching out to guests with upcoming reservations, according to Peduzzi. "All guests with upcoming reservations through August 11th have been advised of the hotel's temporary closure and are working with Marriott and Sheraton Atlanta associates to find alternative accommodations. Guests whose reservations have been canceled will receive full refunds," he said.

James Francey, one of more than 400 relocated guests, told WSB: "This a hazard of travel ... so OK it happens. The CDC is here in town, so that's great."

Peduzzi noted that "many hotel employees have already been redeployed to other hotel properties or continue to work in off-site locations. We are hoping to limit work disruption while the hotel is closed and keep Sheraton Atlanta's associates gainfully employed."

Symptoms of Legionnaires' disease

Legionnaires' begins with a patient feeling tired and weak, according to the educational organization Legionella.org. Other common symptoms include coughing, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, headaches, muscle aches, chest pain and shortness of breath. The incubation period -- the time it takes for symptoms to appear after a person is infected with the bacteria causing the disease -- is from 2 to 10 days.

Described as a "severe, often lethal, form of pneumonia," Legionnaires' can lead to treatment in an intensive care unit, according to Legionella.org. Some symptoms may be long-term: One study showed that three quarters of survivors continued to feel tired, 66% had neurologic symptoms and 63% had neuromuscular symptoms months after their diagnosis.

Scientists dubbed the illness "Legionnaires' disease" following an outbreak in Philadelphia in 1976, largely among people attending a state convention of the American Legion, according to the CDC. Subsequently, the bacterium causing the illness was named Legionella pneumophila.

State epidemiologist Cherie Drenzek told WSB that past outbreaks have been associated with "shower heads, hot tubs, perhaps even ... decorative fountains." Drenzek added that

the Sheraton is also working on the filtration system in the hotel's swimming pool.

5 confirmed cases of Legionella in people who stayed at downtown hotel

 [wsbtv.com/news/local/-get-me-out-hotel-guests-stunned-after-learning-of-reported-legionnaires-cases/967518038](https://www.wsbtv.com/news/local/-get-me-out-hotel-guests-stunned-after-learning-of-reported-legionnaires-cases/967518038)

July 15,
2019



ATLANTA - More hotel guests in downtown Atlanta had to find a new place to stay Tuesday because the Sheraton Hotel on Courtland Street is shut down "until further notice" after guests got sick with Legionnaires' disease.

[READ MORE: [Downtown Atlanta hotel closed after 3 cases of Legionnaires' disease](#)]

The Georgia Department of Health is now investigating **five** confirmed cases of the disease that may have come from the hotel.

Channel 2's Nicole Carr ran into a couple about to check in when they learned about what was going on.

"What was going through your head when you heard Legionnaires' disease?" Carr asked Tom Woodcock and Heather Hellman, of St. Louis.

"Get me out of here," Hellman said.

"How fast can you get me another hotel?" Woodcock said.

[READ MORE: [What is Legionnaires' disease? FAQs about the severe form of pneumonia](#)]

The handful of guests Carr spoke with were from out of state and had not yet heard the news. They were handed relocation paperwork upon arrival.

"Basically, they just said, 'We're going to put you in another hotel.' Not necessarily them giving us input of it being the same caliber, 'cause we picked this hotel out," Woodcock said.

The Sheraton relocated Woodcock and Hellman to the Georgia Tech Hotel and Conference Center, citing an "unexpected event."

Last Friday, a Georgia man made a public Facebook post warning against staying in the hotel after he'd been hospitalized for pneumonia earlier in the week. He confirmed health department involvement.

Carr asked the state health department when reports of sickness began. The first unspecified illness report was last Wednesday.

The hotel has not started Legionella testing, saying they're still researching contractors who they'll pay to develop a plan that must be submitted to the state, according to a Sheraton spokesperson.

There's no definite timeline on what the state calls a complex investigative process with those independent experts.

A state epidemiologist told **Channel 2 Action News** that there were 189 of these cases in Georgia last year.

The caseload has quadrupled in the past decade, but we have not yet received information on whether the state has testing requirements amid what's become a nationwide spike in Legionnaires' cases.

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Downtown Atlanta hotel closed after 3 confirmed cases of Legionnaires' disease

[actionnewsjax.com/news/trending-now/downtown-atlanta-hotel-closed-after-3-confirmed-cases-of-legionnaires-disease/967237802](https://www.actionnewsjax.com/news/trending-now/downtown-atlanta-hotel-closed-after-3-confirmed-cases-of-legionnaires-disease/967237802)

July 14,
2019



The Georgia Department of Health is investigating three confirmed cases of Legionnaires' disease from a downtown Atlanta hotel.

The Sheraton Hotel has been closed until further notice.

A number of guests complained about lung problems after a convention a couple weeks ago.

"It's concerning. No one wants to go on vacation and come back sick," said Marilyn Wilson, who made her reservations at the hotel months ago for her family reunion.

Legionnaires' disease is a type of lung infection that is caused by bacteria that live in warm water. You get it by breathing in affected water droplets and there are many ways to be exposed.

"Showerheads, hot tubs, perhaps even some outbreaks in the past have been associated with decorative fountains," state epidemiologist Cherie Drenzek said.

The state is working with the Fulton County Board of Health, the hotel and environmental specialists.

“They have a beautiful swimming pool and it's shut down right now. They say they're working on the filtration system. Maybe they haven't made the linkage,” Drenzek said.

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