

# CBS46 goes inside newly reopened Sheraton Atlanta following legionnaires' outbreak

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ATLANTA, Ga. (CBS46) -- The day after the Sheraton Atlanta was cleared to reopen, CBS46 checked into the hotel.

At the front desk, guests were being given a notice informing them of the legionella outbreak.

Our room was clean, though we did notice air fresheners on each floor and the ice machines out of order. The Georgia Department of Public Health said legionella bacteria was found in the hotel's cooling tower and in a fountain near the pool.

We called Dr. Janet Stout, an expert in legionella remediation, who said legionella is naturally found in some water systems.

“It isn't until it gets into our buildings and water systems where there's a combination of temperatures from bodies, temperatures from nutrients, and other bacteria, that it actually grows to numbers that are of concern.”

The Sheraton hotel's legionella outbreak claimed one life and sickened plenty of others.

The Sheraton Atlanta General Manager, Ken Peduzzi, agreed to answer our questions off camera. He said remediation included cleaning water lines with high amounts of chlorine, tested every four hours. He said the process involved environmentalists, epidemiologists and outside labs.

Dr. Stout said that sounded about right.

“Very, very high amounts of chlorine in the water or sometimes they will recommend turning the hot water temperature up very, very high,” she said.

Peduzzi said ice machines will remain out of order until filters are changed and the fountain will remain off.

As for the hotel's biggest body of water? Peduzzi said the pool permit passed the week of the outbreak. He said staff was relocated to other hotels, so they could continue to work during the Sheraton's closure.

When asked if he would have done anything differently, he admitted there was some organized chaos the day guests were asked to leave the hotel.