



# CASE STUDY

## Water Treatment Professionals & Cooling Tower Contamination

### The Client:

A water treatment company field representative servicing a building owner.

### The Problem:

Recent diagnosis of a case of Legionnaires' disease in an occupant prompted the building owner to test their cooling towers for the first time. The water treatment professional provided professional consultation for water treatment, but was not in a position to guide the client with information about local, state, and national *Legionella* guidelines and standards. The water treatment professional wanted to help the building owner, but was not knowledgeable enough about *Legionella* to make these recommendations.

### The Challenges:

When performing *Legionella* monitoring for the first time, building owners/operators often respond in panic mode, believing that any type or amount of *Legionella* in a cooling tower is cause for alarm.

The water treatment professional was in a lose-lose situation. Interpretation of results by the water treatment professional is often met with skepticism because they are providing water treatment services.

An objective third party assessment from "The *Legionella* Experts" at the Special Pathogens Laboratory (SPL) created a win-win solution for all involved.

### The Evidence-based Solution:

We used a multidisciplinary approach that included clinical consultation from our Medical Director, Dr. Victor L. Yu, who addressed disease management issues and microbiological analysis and guidance on interpretation of results from Janet E. Stout, Ph.D. This guidance along with engineering support provided an effective action plan.

### The Outcome:

We effectively communicated to the client that although some *Legionella* was identified in the water from the cooling tower, it was not the disease-causing strain. We helped the client work through public relations issues and provided guidance regarding the current *Legionella* guidelines and action plans. We referred the client to the SPL web site ([www.specialpathogenslab.com](http://www.specialpathogenslab.com)) to view our "*Legionella* Fact Sheets" for up-to-date information about the different types of *Legionella* species that can be found in water systems.

### The Impact:

The client avoided costly emergency remediation and the water treatment professional was supported by outside experts in the field. They both relied upon the experience and guidance of our team of experts to manage the often complex problem of *Legionella* in building water systems. **This is the SPL Advantage.**