

HOW TO SUBMIT A WATER SAMPLE FOR BACTERIOLOGICAL TESTING

Please Note:

- For community water systems, water samples should be collected by water purveyors or other suitably trained personnel.
- Samples received at the lab more than 30 hours after collection will be discarded without examination.
- Contact your local Health Protection Office to confirm where and when water samples are accepted in your region for shipping to a lab.

THE WATER SAMPLING KIT

- Water samples for bacteriological examination will ONLY be accepted if they are submitted in a **sterile specimen bottle** provided by the **Interior Health Authority** or an approved Provincial Lab.
- **Requisition forms** are provided by your local Environmental Health Protection Office, Interior Health.



SAMPLE COLLECTION

- Water samples should be collected by water purveyors or other suitably trained personnel.
- Each sample bottle contains some chemical powder or pill called “sodium thiosulphate” to neutralize any chlorine in the water. Neutralizing the chlorine ensures the water sample results are representative of the water quality at the time of sampling, so this chemical must not be discarded or rinsed out.
- Do not take water samples from any tap which may have additional water treatment devices on it (e.g. home water softener, etc..).
- Water samples should only be collected from a cold water tap.

STEP ONE: LABEL THE SAMPLE BOTTLE AND COMPLETE THE PROVIDED REQUISITION FORM

1. The sample bottle label must be filled out with the water system name and the sampling site name.
2. In order for the lab to process the sample, a requisition form must be filled in correctly for each sample bottle.

The following sections must be filled in, please note that some sections may be completed already. (See attached requisition example – sections highlighted in yellow must be filled in.):

- Owner name and contact information;
- Sampler's name and contact information;
- Date collected;
- Time collected (24 hour clock);
- The water system name;
- The site name;
- The site address (*This is the precise location in the distribution system where the sample is taken from. If this box is already filled in, the sample must be taken only from the location specified.*);
- Site treatment? **Tick yes or no.**
- Treatment type (*If yes above, fill in treatment type, e.g. Chlorine. If no above, leave blank.*);
- Chlorine Residual (*in all chlorinated systems*) – Free & Total (ppm);
- Turbidity (*where applicable*);
- Is sample submitted for purposes of the Drinking Water Protection Act? **Tick yes;**
- Is the Water System on a Boil Water Notice? **Tick yes or no.**
- And tick "**Total Coliform**" and "**E. coli**" for the tests required.



STEP TWO: COLLECT DRINKING WATER SAMPLE

1. Before taking a water sample, remove any aerators, hoses, filters, splash guards or screens.
2. Ensure the faucet is free of contamination before the sample is taken. If you suspect the sampling tap may be contaminated or dirty, the faucet may be wiped with an alcohol wipe or a mild chlorine solution (1 part household bleach per 10 parts water) to prevent the tap from contaminating the sample.
3. Flush the water lines before sampling:
 - If water is collected from a tap without a mixing faucet – run the water for 2 to 3 minutes on cold before collecting the sample.
 - If water is collected from a tap with a mixing faucet – run the hot water for 2 minutes and then the cold water for 2 to 3 minutes before sampling.
4. Reduce water flow in order to fill the sample bottle without splashing.

5. Remove cap from the sample bottle without touching the inside of the cap or mouth of the bottle.
6. Fill the sample bottle (without rinsing) to at least the 200mL fill line, marked on the bottle. Do not adjust the fluid level in any manner following collection.
7. Screw cap on tightly.



8. Place completed requisition form inside a zip lock plastic bag and wrap it around the sample bottle with a rubber band and keep the sample cool but not frozen until delivery.

STEP THREE: TRANSPORTING DRINKING WATER SAMPLE

- **Note:** Samples received at the lab **more than 30 hours** after collection will be **discarded** without examination.
- Contact your local Health Protection Office to confirm where and when water samples are accepted in your region for shipping to a lab.
- Ship or deliver samples in cooler with sealed ice packs to **maintain temperature at <10°C** (Do not add ice to the sample).
- Water samples should be delivered to your local Health Centre (or local pre-arranged sample drop-off site) as soon as possible following collection.



REPORTING OF BACTERIOLOGICAL WATER SAMPLE RESULTS

- Sample results are normally mailed to the Health Centre within a week of receipt of sample, or as soon as possible in the event of a poor sample result.
- If water sample is positive for *E.coli*, the water supplier will be contacted by the laboratory and the Drinking Water Officer. The Drinking Water Officer may also contact the water supplier if the sample is positive for Total Coliforms. No contact will be made if the sample is negative.
- In order to see your water system's drinking water sample results visit the Interior Health Public Website : <http://www.interiorhealth.ca/health-and-safety.aspx?id=11052>
- **For any questions, contact an Environmental Health Officer in your area.**

EXAMPLE

Interior Health Authority

Address of Your Area Health Protection Office
 Phone Number: (123) 123-1234 Fax Number: (123) 123-4567

LABORATORY USE ONLY	
Lab Number	
Date Reported	

MHO: Medical Health Officer - on call	Phone #: 1-866-457-5648	E-mail:
DWO / PHI: EHO Name Phone #: 123-123-1234	E-mail: emailaddress@interiorhealth.ca Cell #: 123-123-1234	Fax #: 123-123-4567 Pager #:
OWNER: Owner's Name Phone #:	E-mail: Cell #:	Fax #: Pager #:
Sampler's Name: Sampler's Address:	Date/time collected: (YY/MM/DD)	HR
Facility Name: Waterworks District	Facility Number: 13-105-12345	
System Name: Waterworks District	System Type: Water System 15-300 Connections	
Site Name: Distribution System	Site Type: Distribution	Site Code: D04LAKCHL2
Site Address: Where the sample is taken from	GIS Location: Longitude	Latitude
Source: Lake	Population: 501-1000	
Site Treatment: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Treatment Type: Chlorine	
Chlorine Residual: Free ppm Total ppm	pH:	Turbidity: NTU

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Is sample submitted for purposes of the Drinking Water Protection Act?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the Water System on Boil Water Notice?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Since When?
Sample Submitted for:	Routine

Print or Type in Box Full Postal Address of Health Unit or Persons Authorized to Receive Report	Additional Copy of Report Send to:										
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Drinking Water Officer Contact Name</td> <td>1.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Health Centre Name</td> <td>2.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Site Address</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>City, BC Postal Code</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Phone: Fax:</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Drinking Water Officer Contact Name	1.	Health Centre Name	2.	Site Address		City, BC Postal Code		Phone: Fax:		
Drinking Water Officer Contact Name	1.										
Health Centre Name	2.										
Site Address											
City, BC Postal Code											
Phone: Fax:											

Test Required	LABORATORY USE ONLY			
	Preliminary Result	Technician Initial & Date	Final Result	CFU per ml
	Count per 100 ml		Count per 100 ml	
<input type="checkbox"/> Total Coliform				
<input type="checkbox"/> E. coli				
<input type="checkbox"/> Background Growth > 200				
<input type="checkbox"/> Overgrown without coliform/results inconclusive				
<input type="checkbox"/> Overgrown, coliform present				
<input type="checkbox"/> Overgrown, E. coli present				
<input type="checkbox"/> Overgrown without E. coli/results inconclusive				
<input type="checkbox"/> Too Long in Transit				
<input type="checkbox"/> HPC				
<input type="checkbox"/> Free Chlorine				
<input type="checkbox"/> Total Chlorine				
<input type="checkbox"/> Other				
<input type="checkbox"/> Previous Sample Overgrown				

Check 2 consecutive volumes for sewage/pollution sample: 50mL 10mL 1mL 0.1mL 0.01mL 0.001mL