



Tips for Collecting and Submitting Water Samples

Please ensure water samples are taken AFTER 10:00am on Tuesday of each week and dropped off at our office prior to 3:00pm the same day. Then deliver samples to Public Health in the Vermilion Provincial Building.

General Sampling Requirements

- 1) **The testing laboratories will only accept water samples for bacteriological and routine chemical analysis if they are submitted in the “approved” sampling containers.**
These containers are available at all Community Health Centres and Health Units. Water samples will not be accepted in any other type of container, nor can the water sample be transferred from another type of container into an approved sampling container (this could result in contamination of the sample).
- 2) **Water samples will only be accepted from a supply that is intended for human consumption.**
Samples of water intended for livestock, irrigation, or industrial processes must be submitted through other government agencies or private laboratories (check the Yellow Pages under the heading “Laboratories”). Water samples submitted for the purpose of mortgage approval or to determine the effectiveness of water treatment equipment must be submitted to a private laboratory (check the Yellow Pages under the heading “Laboratories”).
- 3) **The Requisition Form accompanying the sampling container must be filled out completely.**
This includes providing information on the point of sampling, the rural land location (if applicable), the date and time of sampling, as well as your name, mailing address, and telephone number.
- 4) **The self-adhesive Identification Label must be detached from the front page of the Requisition Form and affixed to the sampling container.**
The Laboratory will not process samples if the Identification Label is not affixed to the sampling container. *Additional directions/instructions for collecting water samples are also provided on the front page of the Requisition Form.*
- 5) **All samples should be collected from the cold water supply, preferably from the most commonly used tap in the house (usually the kitchen tap).**
Samples should not be collected from an outside tap, garden hose, or a faucet extension.
- 6) **Samples should be collected before the water passes through any water treatment device such as a water softener, iron filter, or carbon filter (of any kind).**
If you do not have any water treatment devices, you may collect the sample directly from the kitchen tap; otherwise collect the sample from another tap before any treatment.
- 7) ***It is also important to note that swivel sprayers (and faucet screens) attached to the end of the tap affect the bacteriological quality of the sample; therefore, such devices should be removed before collecting the sample.***

Collecting Water Samples For Bacteriological Analysis

- 1) When collecting the sample wash your hands, **do not touch the underside of the cap or the lip of the bottle, and do not place the cap down on the counter** (hold the sampling container in one hand and the cap in the other). These situations could result in bacteria being introduced into the sample, giving an inaccurate representation of the quality of the supply.
- 2) **Allow the cold water to run continuously for 5 minutes before collecting the sample.** Do not adjust the tap at any time before collecting the sample – let the water run, take the sample, and then turn the tap off. If you adjust the tap, you should allow the water to run continuously for another 5 minutes before collecting the sample
- 3) **Fill the sampling container past the 200-ml. mark** to about the shoulder of the bottle. Always leave some air space to allow the water to expand as it warms up during transportation. Replace the cap tightly, **affix the Identification Label to the sampling container, and place the water sample and the completed Requisition Form into the plastic “Ziploc” Bag.**
- 4) The Provincial Lab must test samples for bacteriological analysis within 24 hours of sampling. If the Provincial Lab does not receive the sample within six (6) hours of sampling, it must be stored and shipped in a cooler with an ice pack.

As the Lab is only open on weekdays during business hours, all samples must be delivered before 3:30pm Mondays to Fridays. It is the responsibility of the homeowner to ensure that the water sample arrives at the Provincial Lab on time. Therefore, it is recommended that all samples be:

- collected immediately prior to shipping,
- shipped to the Provincial Laboratory by private courier or by bus, or
- transported directly to the Provincial Laboratory.
- additional instructions may be found on the front page of the requisition form.

Collecting Water Samples For Routine Chemical Analysis

- 1) Allow the cold water to run continuously for 5 minutes before collecting the sample. Do not adjust the tap at any time before collecting the sample – let the water run, take the sample, and then turn the tap off. If you adjust the tap, you should allow the water to run continuously for another 5 minutes before collecting the sample.
- 2) Fill the sampling container, leaving about an inch of air space to allow the water to expand as it warms up during transportation. Replace the cap tightly; **affix the 2 identification Labels to the sampling container, one on the lid and one on the container. Place the water sample and the completed Requisition Form into the plastic “Ziploc” bag.**
- 3) Additional instructions may be found on the front page of the requisition form.
- 4) Samples for routine chemical analysis may only be submitted through a Community Health Centre or Health Unit.