

HOW TO COLLECT A WATER SAMPLE FOR MICROBIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS (Total Coliform/E.coli)

Monday - Thursday 8:30 am - 5:00 pm Friday 8:30 am - 1:00 pm

When mailing samples, collect after 9:00AM the same day you mail. Do NOT mail on Thursday, Friday, Saturday, or the day before any holiday.

EPA protocol requires that the analysis for Coliform bacteria begins within 30 hours of collection.

- 1- Do **NOT** open the sample bottle until you are ready to fill it.
- 2- Select a sample tap from which to take the sample. If you have treatment devices, such as a water softener or a reverse osmosis filter on your water system, you need to decide what you want to test. Do you want to know about your source water quality or the water you are actually drinking? If you want to sample what you are using, simply get the sample from the tap you get drinking water from. If you want to sample your source water, locate a faucet which is attached to the water line before the treatment system.
- 3- Always sample from the cold water tap. Try to avoid sampling from drinking fountains or outside hydrants/spigots. Remove any faucet attachments (aeration screens, hoses, ect.)
- 4- Remove screen from inside faucet and **DISINFECT** mouth of faucet with bleach or other disinfecting agent.
- 5- Open the tap fully. Let the water run to waste for 3-4 minutes, ensuring sufficient time to allow flushing of the service line and the removal of any residual disinfectant.
- 6- Reduce the flow to about the diameter of a pencil. **NOTE:** If the water dribbles to the faucet edge and contacts the metal before entering the bottle, the sample may be contaminated; re-adjust the flow or select a different sampling tap.
- 7- Wash your hands with warm soapy water for at least 30 seconds and dry them with a clean towel. Open the bottle, being very careful not to breathe onto the mouth of the container, or to allow anything to fall into the opening of the bottle. It takes very little bacteria to contaminate the whole sample. Hold the lid in one hand while filling the bottle. If you need to put the cap down, sit it with the inside facing up in a clean, calm area. The bottle contains sodium thiosulfate in a powder, liquid, or pill form. Do **not** remove the powder, liquid or pill from the container. Do not rinse the bottle before filling (sodium thiosulfate neutralizes the chlorine in the water). **HINT:** It is easier to write on the bottle when the sample has not yet been taken. Use ball point pen or permanent ink marker and allow any ink to dry before filling the sample bottle.
- 8- Fill the container up to at least the **100 mL line** and then replace the cap on the container.
- 9- Complete the information on the sample bottle label and on this chain of custody form. Transport the sample to Bridger Analytical Lab using the shortest transit time possible. Try to maintain the sample at room temperature. Do not freeze or overheat the sample. If holding overnight, keep the sample refrigerated or in a cooler with ice.
- 10- **All positive total Coliform samples are confirmed for the presence of *E.Coli*. If the sample is found to be positive for *E. coli*, the microbiological report will indicate its presence.**

All results are confidential. Results will only be released by Bridger Analytical Lab, Inc. to the owner of the property. The results may be duplicated for third party persons pending permission from the owner of the property tested.

Please contact the lab with any questions, including turnaround time and cost.