

Sampling Instructions For Potable Water



FDOH (Florida Department of Health) Environmental Laboratory in West Palm Beach is a microbiological water testing certified laboratory. Our trained staff analyzes water samples for bacteriological contamination, total coliform and *E. coli* in drinking water samples, and enterococci in non-potable water samples.

Residents or visitors wishing to have their water tested for bacterial contamination will be provided with a sterile sample bottle and instructions for taking the sample. The fee for drinking water analysis is \$30.00 per sample and non-potable water analysis is \$50.00 per sample. Fee must be paid when the sample bottle is picked up from our laboratory.

General Instructions

- Samples to be analyzed must be collected in traceable containers provided by the FDOH laboratory preserved with sodium thiosulfate (0.008% $\text{Na}_2\text{S}_2\text{O}_3$) for dechlorination of the sample.
- When sampling for drinking water compliance, the sampling point is normally designated by regulatory agencies. Refer to DEP-SOP-001/1 (FT 2000 & FS 2300) for Field Measurement of Residual Chlorine.
- Before sampling check the environmental conditions, it is not recommended to carry out sampling during heavy rains, drizzles, or strong winds.
- Your water sample must be taken and brought to the laboratory for testing on the same day.
- Water samples are accepted by the FDOH Environmental Laboratory Health in West Palm Beach ONLY **Monday through Thursday 8:00am – 4:00pm**. Samples are not accepted on Fridays.
- Collection of samples for microbiological examination must be in a clean, sterile plastic bottle provided by FDOH Laboratory.
- Proper sample collection technique is important to maintain the sample's integrity.
- Improper sample handling can invalidate the results of any laboratory analysis.
- Plan to collect a representative sample of the water being tested.
- If testing distribution-system water, for example, avoid taps connected to private water treatment equipment, such as softeners or filters.
- Also, avoid taps subject to exterior contamination if there are too close to a sink bottom or the ground.
- Select a tap that is supplying water from a service pipe directly connected with the main (e.g., NOT one served from a cistern or storage tank).
- Do not sample from leaking taps that allow water to flow over the outside of the tap.
- Sample must be collected and transported to the laboratory the same day of collection; refrigerated in a cooler with ice.



Documentation

Sample should be accompanied by complete, accurate sample-information form (Chain of Custody) that includes the following information, as applicable: name of system or site; sample type; sample point (location); date, and time and sampler contact information.

1. Using a permanent marker, label the bottle with the date and location of the sample.

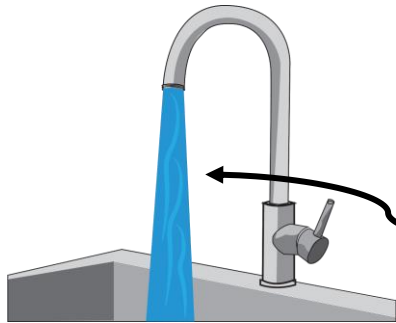
Keep sample bottle closed until just before collecting sample



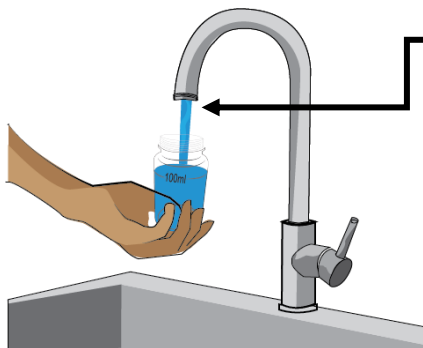
2. If not specified by regulatory agencies, select an accessible location near the supply line or, if at a private residence, at an outside spigot.



3. Remove any attachment from the faucet (e.g., filters, aerators, flow directors, or screen) that the sample will be taken from, because they may harbor bacteria that do not reflect the source's water quality.



4. Open cold water taps fully and let water run to waste just long enough to clear the service line (~2 or 3 min).



5. Reduce water flow so bottle can be filled without splashing.
6. Remove completely the plastic seal from the bottle where the sample is to be placed. Do not touch the rim of the bottle, inside of the cap or inside of the bottle.
7. Uncap the sample bottle and do not set on any surface.
8. Collect sample by carefully holding bottle in the water flow.



9. Fill the bottle to the 100mL line. Our laboratory will not accept sample less than 100mL.
10. Do not overfill or rinse out the sample bottles, this will cause the preservative inside the bottles to spill out, and validity of the sample cannot be guaranteed.
11. Replace the screw cap securely on the bottle and tip the container several times to mix the preservative with the sample.
12. If the sample is not going to be delivered immediately, place it in the refrigerator until the time of transportation. The sample must be delivered the same day of the collection.

13. Place the sample bottle in a cooler or plastic bag that contains ice. Make sure that any melted ice water does not raise above the sample containers.

14. Transport sample to the laboratory refrigerated.

