

Private Water Supply Sampling and Shipping Instructions – Microbiology
Illinois Department of Public Health

The enclosed bottle(s) has (have) been sterilized. Follow these instructions to ensure that samples are free of outside contamination and are representative of the water at the time of sampling. Wash your hands before sample collection

Sampling Instructions – Water Samples for Sanitary Analysis

Fill the bottle to the 120 ml line on the bottle. The level of water should be below the neck of the bottle to allow for proper mixing in the laboratory.

Sampling Instructions – Drinking Water

Sampling Point: Select a faucet without a threaded outlet. Select a faucet closest to the well and before the water softener. Do not take samples from a fire or yard hydrant. Avoid swing faucets and faucets leaking at the handle or those that have attachments such as a hose, aerator, purification device, etc. Avoid faucets where food or beverages are dispensed or prepared.

Collecting: Allow water to flow smoothly from pump to faucet for at least three minutes. Carefully unscrew the cap of the bottle, holding both cap and bottle in such a way that inside edges and threads are not touched. **Do not rinse out the bottle.** A chemical is intentionally added to some bottles. Do not lay the cap down while collecting the sample. Fill the bottle to the 120 ml line. The level of water should be below the neck of the bottle to allow for proper mixing in the laboratory. After the bottle is filled, carefully replace the cap.

Sample Form Instructions:

Complete the sample form. Print legibly using permanent ink. Keep all letters in the boxes. Special requests may be placed in the remarks area of the form.

Sample Acceptance Protocol:

The following requirements are necessary for the submitted sample to be considered “acceptable.” Failure to follow these requirements will cause the sample form to be marked with the deficiencies. In addition, the sample analysis itself may be considered unacceptable for compliance purposes.

1. Only containers provided by the laboratory will be acceptable for sample analysis by this method.
2. Sample bottles must be filled to the 120 ml line on the bottle.
3. Sample form/Chain of Custody form must be typed or printed legibly with permanent ink.
4. The following information must be present and legible on the sample form: sample identification/location, **date and time of collection**, sample type, and collector’s name.
5. Samples must arrive in the laboratory within 30 hours of collection.
6. Samples that show signs of damage or contamination are considered unacceptable for testing.

Shipping Instructions:

Collect samples on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday, so the laboratory tests can be completed during the same week.

If possible, collect samples shortly before shipping them to the laboratory. The samples should reach the laboratory as quickly as possible. Pack samples properly to withstand transport in a shipping container.

Because the sample must arrive at the laboratory within 30 hours of collection, it is suggested that a commercial carrier (for example, UPS or FedEx) be used to ship the samples to the laboratory. Two to six days are required to complete the analysis. Your report will be mailed as soon as possible by your local or regional health department. If the report is not received in 10 days, please call your local or regional health department or the Illinois Department of Public Health Laboratory responsible for analyzing the sample.