

Drinking water tested for total coliform bacteria must be sampled properly to ensure accurate results. Samples for total coliform bacteria can fail simply due to sampling error, even though the water may not actually be contaminated.

If you have sampling questions or problems, call your project manager.

To view and print EPA's comprehensive publication "A Small Systems Guide to the Total Coliform Rule" visit:

www.epa.gov/ogwdw/disinfection/tcr/pdfs/small-tcr.pdf



Our Laboratories

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Total Coliform Bacteria Sampling Instructions

A Step-by-Step Guide



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Total Coliform Bacteria Water Samples should be prepared by following these step-by-step instructions:

STEP 1



WASH YOUR HANDS prior to taking the sample.

STEP 2



REMOVE FAUCET SCREEN or other hoses or aerators from the end of the faucet. If possible, avoid using a faucet that swivels. DO NOT sample from a garden hose.

STEP 3



DISINFECT THE FAUCET. While this is optional, it is a good precaution to take. Using a spray bottle, spray bleach inside the faucet. Using a cotton swab or paper towel, wipe the inside and outside of the tap with alcohol or bleach.

STEP 4



RUN COLD WATER AT FULL VOLUME FOR AT LEAST 2 MINUTES. This will ensure that all of the bleach has been rinsed from the faucet and that the water you are sampling has not been sitting in the pipes or tanks for a long time.

STEP 5



DO NOT rinse out the bottle. The powder in the bottle is meant to be there and will not contaminate your sample.

STEP 6



COMPLETELY REMOVE THE GREY CUSTODY SEAL TAB AND OPEN THE BOTTLE carefully to ensure that you do not touch the inside of the cap, the bottle threads, the inside of the bottle, or the faucet.

STEP 7



TURN THE WATER DOWN so it does not splash. Fill the bottle to the fill line (100 ml). Keep the bottle under the stream of water; DO NOT touch the bottle to the faucet. Do not fill it all the way up to the top.

STEP 8



SCREW THE CAP ON TIGHTLY. Take special care not to touch the inside of the cap or bottle. If you do, start over with a new bottle.

STEP 9



COMPLETELY FILL OUT AND LABEL EACH SAMPLE, AND COMPLETE CHAIN OF CUSTODY (COC) FORM. Dates and times must be included on sample and COC, and they must match. Pack the sample in the Styrofoam container, and mail it with the COC to the lab.

THE LAB MUST receive the sample during business hours and within 30 hours of collection.