

Water Sample Collection Frequently Asked Questions

Q: The lab that I normally use is closed this weekend/holiday. Do I need to wait until Monday or the next business day to take samples?

A: Wait until the next business day to collect the sample, unless the monitoring period ends before that day. To avoid this situation, always sample early in the monitoring period, and know which labs near you accept samples on weekends. For repeat bacteriological samples following a routine total coliform positive result, contact the field office.

Q: If my test kit is outdated, how do I get a new sample kit over the holiday/weekend?

A: Waterworks that use DCLS will have to wait until the next business day to order a new sample kit. Some private labs or labs operated by a municipal waterworks may be open on the weekends. You should contact them directly to confirm their hours.

Q: How do I contact DCLS after-hours if I can't reach my current lab?

A: Ordering routine sample kits is not possible after-hours. Wait until the next business day.

Q: What happens if the lab rejects my sample(s)?

A: When a sample is rejected by DCLS, a replacement sample kit is shipped out immediately. The kit should have a label that identifies it as a replacement. DCLS does not typically email or call the sample collector.

Most private labs notify the sample collector by email that the sample was rejected and that collection of another sample is required.

Q: What should I do if I knowingly contaminate a sample or sample from the wrong location?

A: Discard the contaminated sample and collect another. Keeping extra bacteriological sample bottles on hand is highly recommended.

Q: Are there specific days of the week I shouldn't sample?

A: Most private labs will add a surcharge for samples received on Fridays, so it is best to sample early in the week. This also helps to avoid last-minute emergencies that would lead to a missed sample.

Q: Are there any water samples DCLS can't process at this time?

A: DCLS is currently unable to process PFAS samples. A list of DCLS certified labs that can sample for PFAS can be found [here](#).

Q: Where can I drop off samples for DCLS?

A: Please refer to [this list](#) of courier sites where you can drop off DCLS samples. You can also drop off samples at DCLS directly.

Q: How can I avoid contaminating a total coliform sample and getting a false positive?

A: Ensure you collect the sample following the guidelines in [this video](#).