



# Taking Your Samples

## A Guide for Public Water Systems

Maine CDC Drinking Water Program • 11 SHS Augusta, ME 04330 • 287-2070 • www.medwp.com

### Why is Sampling Important?

Water tests reveal whether your drinking water meets required health standards. Without proper testing you cannot be sure of the safety of your drinking water.



### When Do I Need to Sample?

Refer to the *Drinking Water Testing Requirement Report* to determine the required sampling and sampling frequency during your Annual Operating Period (AOP). Your AOP is listed in the top right hand corner of the *Required Testing Sheet* and indicates when your water system is operational and serving water to the public. (Samples are required to be collected only when the water system is serving water to the public.)

Samples are required on monthly, quarterly, yearly, 3-year, 6-year, or 9-year testing schedule. Monthly samples must be collected within a calendar month and quarterly samples must be collected within a calendar quarter.

#### Example:

If you are open from May - October, you would need to collect a total of three quarterly samples during your operational period: one in Quarter 2 (either in May or June), one in Quarter 3 (July, August or September), and one in Quarter 4 (in October).

Yearly samples can be collected anytime within your AOP, except for samples that must be collected during summer months (i.e. disinfection by-products). Water tests required every few years must be collected in the designated year. Call your public water system inspector if you have any questions.

### What Happens If I Miss a Sample?

If you miss a sampling deadline, it is important that you call and notify your public water system inspector as soon as you become aware of the oversight. Conduct the water test as soon as you can and issue the required public notice to your customers. Your public water system inspector will help guide you through this process.

#### Please remember to complete the following items when sampling:

1. Carefully follow the directions for collecting the sample and completing the paperwork;
2. Make sure to always include your system name and PWSID# on all sample sheets/correspondence;
3. When you take your sample(s) to the certified lab make sure they know the sample(s) is for drinking water compliance and that results must be sent to the Drinking Water Program by the 10th day of the month following the sample collection period; and
4. Verify with your lab that your results were submitted.

A Sampling Quarter is the same as a Calendar Quarter. If you are required to sample within a specific Quarter, the sample must be taken within the Calendar Quarter.

Sampling Quarter	Dates
1st Quarter	January 1 - March 31
2nd Quarter	April 1 - June 30
3rd Quarter	July 1 - September 30
4th Quarter	October 1 - December 31



## Sample Collection Locations and Hold Times

Water Test Type	Collection Location ♦	Hold Time •
Alkalinity	As designated	14 Days
Asbestos	Within the distribution from a tap served by asbestos-cement pipe	48 Hours
Bacteria	Approved designated sample location(s) in distribution	30 Hours
Cyanide	At entry point into distribution*	7 Days
Fluoride	If fluoridating sample from the distribution, otherwise entry point	28 Days
Inorganic Compounds	At entry point into distribution	48 Hours
Lead and Copper	Approved designated sample location(s) in distribution	14 Days
Nitrate	At entry point into distribution*	48 Hours
Nitrite	At entry point into distribution*	48 Hours
Radiological	At entry point into distribution*	5 Days
Radon	At entry point into distribution*	4 Days
Synthetic Organic Compounds	At entry point into distribution*	7 Days
Total Organic Carbon	As designated	28 Days
Trihalo-methanes (THM) and Haloacetic Acids (HAA5)	Approved designated sample location(s) in distribution	7 Days
Volatile Organic Compounds	At entry point into distribution*	14 Days

♦ Contact your public water system inspector if you have any questions about sampling locations.

• Hold Time is the length of time a sample can be stored after collection and prior to analysis.

\*The entry point sample should be collected after any treatment and before the first user faucet.

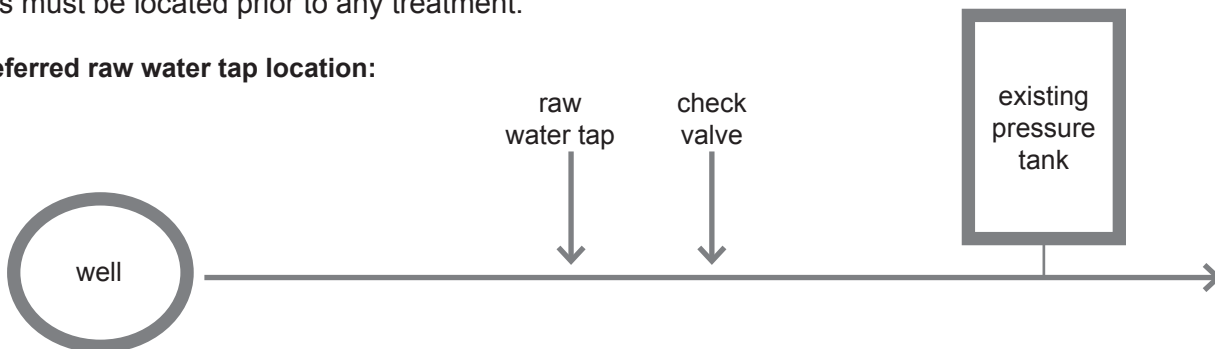
### How is a Sample Collected?

Directions on how to collect various samples are provided by your lab with the sample kit. Otherwise, directions on how to collect samples can be found on the Drinking Water Program website, [www.medwp.com](http://www.medwp.com) > Public Water Systems > Water Sampling and Testing. If you would like directions mailed to you, please contact the Drinking Water Program, 287-2070.

### What is a Ground Water Rule Source Water Tap?

The Ground Water Rule requires all water systems serving groundwater to conduct raw water tests when they have an initial positive bacteria sample. As a result, all public water systems need to have a raw water tap. The taps must be located prior to any treatment.

Preferred raw water tap location:



### Other Questions?

If you have any further questions regarding your sampling and reporting requirements contact your public water system inspector or call the Drinking Water Program at: 287-2070.