



HOW TO COLLECT A WATER SAMPLE



Background

"Coliform Bacteria" is a general term used to describe a group of bacteria whose presence indicates contamination of a water system. Certain types of coliform, such as E. coli, are capable of causing illness in humans. Thurston County recommends that private well owners test their water at least once a year for coliform bacteria and once every three years for nitrates.

When and Where to Pickup Sampling Bottles and Submit a Sample for Testing

PICK UP EMPTY BOTTLES FOR TESTING AT:

- Public Health Building, 412 Lilly Rd NE, Olympia • Water Laboratory (360)867-2631
Inside Front Counter -Mon-Fri 9AM-4PM or call lab
- 3000 Pacific Ave SE, Olympia 2nd Floor at Environmental Health • (360) 867-2685
Mon-Fri 8AM-4PM

You have the option to prepay at these locations with cash, check, credit card (please note to pay with a card there is a 2.35% fee).

DROP OFF WATER SAMPLES FOR TESTING AT:

- Public Health Building, 412 Lilly Rd NE, Olympia (360) 867-2500 • Water Laboratory (360) 867-2631
External Water Sample Mailbox -Mon-Wed 8AM-5PM and Thur 8AM-12:30PM
Inside Front Counter -Mon-Wed 9AM-4PM and Thur 9AM-12:30PM
- 3000 Pacific Ave SE, Olympia 2nd Floor at Environmental Health • (360) 867-2673
Mon-Wed 8AM-1PM

Nitrate Samples Accepted on Mondays and Tuesdays ONLY.

Please note: Fridays, no water samples are accepted.

If not prepaid, attach \$32 cash or a check made out to TCEH.

When returning samples to the locations below, the water sample must be collected Tuesday morning and dropped off no later than noon on Tuesday. Because these sites do not collect fees, when you return the sample, attach a check for \$32, payable to TCEH.

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| • Rainier Town Hall , 102 Rochester St W
360-446-2636
PICK-UP: Monday–Thursday, 8 am–5 pm
DROP-OFF: Tuesdays only, 8 am–noon | • Rochester (R.O.O.F.) , 10140 Highway 12360-
360-273-6375
PICK-UP: Mon–Fri, 9:30 am–5:30 pm
DROP-OFF: Tuesdays only, 9:30 am–noon |
| • Tenino City Hall , 149 S. Hodgden
360-264-2368
PICK-UP: Tuesday–Friday, 8 am–4 pm
DROP-OFF: Tuesdays only, 8 am–noon | • Yelm Public Works , 901 Rhoton Rd. SE
360-458-3244
PICK-UP: Monday–Friday, 8 am–5 pm
DROP-OFF: Tuesdays only, 8 am–noon |

DELIVER YOUR SAMPLE FOR TESTING ON THE SAME DAY THAT YOU COLLECT IT.

Nitrate Samples Only Accepted on Monday and Tuesday

Complete Lab Form

Fill out the lab form completely down to the "DRINKING WATER RESULTS" section, **pressing firmly** with a black pen. Be sure the form is filled out **COMPLETELY** including the **CORRECT DATE AND TIME OF COLLECTION**. **Please do not remove any copies of the lab slip.** The completed lab slip will be provided to you with your results.

- **For a private well** sample, under "Type of Sample", mark #4 "Sample Collected for Information Only".
- **For a well that serves two homes**, under "Type of Water System", check "Other" and write two-party; under "Type of Sample", check #1 "Routine Distribution Sample".
- **For a Public Water System** (3 or more homes), under "Group A and Group B Systems", provide the system ID# and name of the community water system (if you don't know the number, call the Environmental Health Dept); under "Type of Sample", check #1 "Routine Distribution Sample".

Keep Sample Bottle Sterile

Your sample bottle has been sterilized. For accurate testing, it is important to keep it free from contamination. If you accidentally contaminate it, please return it for another sterile bottle. Do not boil the bottle or put anything inside it except your sample.

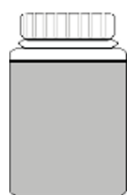
- You may see moisture or white powder in the bottle—it is supposed to be there.
- Do not put tape, or in any way mark or write, on the bottle

DO NOT Heat Your Sample

Keep your water sample out of the sunlight and heat, especially when transporting it in your car. If it will take more than an hour to deliver your sample for testing, we recommend transporting it in a cooler with ice. A warm sample can change your sample results.

Sample Collection

1. Select a faucet in the kitchen, utility room or bathroom (avoid single handle faucet that mixes hot and cold or a spray type faucet). Non frost-free outdoor faucets are also acceptable.
2. Remove any filters or screens from the faucet tap.
3. Turn on the cold water and let it run for at least five minutes. Turn off the water.
4. Disinfect the tap by scrubbing the exposed tap with a small brush dipped in a mild bleach solution. Use a standard bleach, one without fragrance or dye with a sodium hypochlorite concentration of 5.25% or greater, mixing approximately 1/8th teaspoon per 1 cup of water.
5. Turn the cold water back on to an even low flow, remove the cap from the sample bottle and collect your sample as described below.



Fill bottle at or slightly above the line. Verify by viewing at eye level. This leaves an air space for mixing.

Do not set the cap down or touch the inside of the cap or bottle.

6. Re-cap the bottle and deliver to the lab as soon as possible.

Reporting of Results

You should receive test results by mail within a few days of when you submit your sample. If you desire results faster, write your email in the "send results to" section of the lab slip. If your sample shows contamination, we will call you with the results immediately and mail or email well disinfecting instructions with your report. Those instructions are available on our website at <https://www.thurstoncountywa.gov/departments/public-health-and-social-services/environmental-health/water/water-lab>

Collecting Other Samples — Lakes, rivers, reservoirs, swimming pools

Select a spot where a representative sample can be taken. Remove the cap from the sample bottle and collect the sample by submerging the bottle completely in the water. Do this in a continuous sweeping motion, extending the mouth of the bottle into the water and sweeping to a depth of approximately 1 1/2 feet. Continue the sweep to the water surface and above. Carefully pour off the water above the shoulder of the bottle, and then replace the cap without touching the mouth of the bottle. Submit **non-drinking water samples** Monday through Thursday to our location at the Thurston County Courthouse.

Please Note

This test is for Coliform bacteria only (including E. coli.). Thurston County also provides nitrate testing, which is recommended once every three years. If you want your water tested for minerals or other chemicals, a list of state-certified laboratories is available from Thurston County Environmental Health and the Washington State Department of Health.

For more information call: Thurston County Public Health & Social Services
Environmental Health Division
Water Laboratory 360-867-2631
TDD Line for hearing impaired, 1-800-658-6384