



WATER SAMPLING PROCEDURE FOR COLIFORM BACTERIA ANALYSIS

The individual well user can collect coliform bacteria samples without difficulty. Most laboratories and well drillers will perform sampling for a fee if you are unable to. If you do it yourself, keep in mind that you should follow proper sampling procedures in order to get the best sample possible from your well. Improper sample handling or failure to follow the simple procedures listed below may result in a false positive result.

To collect the sample you will need a small quantity of household liquid bleach and a bacteria sample bottle. Sample bottles can be obtained, free of charge, at the Gallatin Local Water Quality District or Gallatin City-County Environmental Health Services offices located at 215 W. Mendenhall in Bozeman. Sample bottles can also be obtained from any of the laboratories certified for testing drinking water in Montana. A listing of laboratories serving Montana is located on the back of this sheet.

PROCEDURE:

Important Timetables: Many laboratories do not accept water samples for bacterial analysis after Thursday. Consult the lab you plan to use before collecting the sample. You should deliver the sample to the lab within 24 hours. Keep the sample refrigerated (not frozen) prior to delivery to the lab.

Select the sampling point: If you do not have any water treatment devices such as a water softener or carbon filter, you can take the sample from any cold water tap in the house. If you do have a water softener or filtration system installed in your house you will need to collect the sample at a faucet between the well and the treatment unit. If you do not have a household treatment system, take the sample from the kitchen sink. Other faucets may be used for sampling, however the kitchen faucet is used most often for drinking water in the home. If possible, choose a non-leaking, non-swivel, non-mixing faucet.

Once you have selected a sampling point: Remove the faucet screen and aerator from the faucet (if present). Clean the exterior of the faucet with a chlorine bleach or rubbing alcohol. Then clean the interior threads of the faucet mouth. Be diligent in this process or you could get a false positive test result! Now let the lines flush for 2-3 minutes and then reduce the water flow down to a pencil-thin stream and fill the bacteria bottle. Do not open the sterile sample bottle until you are actually ready to collect the water sample.

When you are ready: Open the sample bottle being careful **not to touch** the inside of the container or lid. Do not lay the bottle cap down on the counter. If you do, discard the container and use another. When you open the bottle, you will observe a small amount of powder in the bottle; this is a preservative added by the lab. **Do not rinse the bottle!** Fill the sample bottle to the top shoulder of the container. Put the lid on tightly.

Finally: Complete the sampling information form provided with each sample bottle. Then deliver the sample to the laboratory you have selected for analysis. If mailing your sample, remember to do so the same day you collect the sample.

When in doubt, call the lab or Gallatin Local Water Quality District and ask questions prior to sampling.



Gallatin Local Water Quality District
215 W. Mendenhall, Suite 300
Bozeman, MT 59715
(406) 582-3168
www.glwqd.org

Montana Laboratories Certified for Drinking Water Testing

CERTIFIED MONTANA LABORATORIES	CERTIFIED FOR						
	Microbiological	Nitrate	*Inorganics	**SOCs	***VOCs	Metals	Asbestos
Alpine Analytical 406-449-6282 1315 Cherry Avenue, Helena, MT 59601	Yes						
AMATEC 406-248-2159 1537 Ave D, Suite 141, Billings, MT 59104	Yes						
Aqua Tech Water Lab 406-538-6988 505 W. Main, Suite 320, Lewistown, MT 59457	Yes						
Billings Public Utilities Lab 406-657-8346 2251 Bellknap, Billings, MT 59101	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	
Bridger Analytical Labs, Inc. 406-582-0822 7539 Pioneer Way, Ste C, Bozeman, MT 59718	Yes	Yes	Yes				
Energy Labs – Billings 800-735-4489 1120 S. 27th St., Billings, MT 59107	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Energy Labs – Helena 406-442-0711 P. O. Box 5688, Helena, MT 59604	Yes	Yes					
EMSL Analytical, Inc. 406-293-9066 107 W. 4th St., Libby, MT 59923							Yes
Great Falls Water Plant 406-727-1325 P. O. Box 5021, Great Falls, MT 59403	Yes						
MSE Technical Applications 406-494-7334 200 Technology Way, Butte, MT 59701	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	
Mission Mountain Lab 406-370-1089 P. O. Box 606 Arlee, MT 59821	Yes	Yes					
Missoula Health Dept. Lab 406-523-4755 301 West Alder, Missoula, MT 59802	Yes						
MT Bureau Mines & Geology 406-494-4747 11300 West Park		Yes	Yes			Yes	
Montana Environmental Lab 406-755-2131 P. O. Box 8900, Kalispell, MT 59904	Yes	Yes	Yes				
Mountain Zone Laboratory 406-208-4659 302 Indian Creek Road 4, Huntley, MT 59037	Yes						
Pace Analytical 406-254-7226 602 South 25th Street, Billings, MT 59107		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
RD Water Lab LLC 406-721-8179 P. O. Box 5064, Missoula, MT 59806	Yes						
MT DPHHS-Environmental Lab 406-444-2642 1400 Broadway - P. O. Box 4369	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	

*Inorganic compounds (metals, salts, etc.)

**SOCs are synthetic organic chemicals (pesticides, etc.)

***VOCs are volatile organic chemicals (solvents, etc.)

This list is subject to change without notification and will be updated as laboratories obtain certification.

List obtained from MT DEQ (Public Water) Updated November 2012.