

The Public Health Lab: Environmental Laboratory (2:18)

Female Narrator: The Environmental Laboratory performs chemical, bacteriological, and radiological analysis of environmental samples to make sure the water you drink, the air you breathe, the lakes you visit, and the soil your food is grown in does not make you sick.

On average, the Environmental Lab gets over 40,000 samples every year. Testing these samples does more than keep Minnesotans healthy; the information is used to make sure the state of Minnesota meets federal requirements like the Safe Drinking Water Act and the Clean Water Act.

In addition to testing, the environmental lab and our partners across the state are ready to support emergency response activities. After floods, we perform bacterial contamination testing on well water samples. We test unknown substances to assist first responders. We prepare and do drills for radiologic emergencies like nuclear power plant accidents and we conduct special biomonitoring testing as a part of the Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention's Laboratory Response Network for Chemical Threats.

(1:15)

The Environmental Laboratory also participates in special public and environmental health projects to help protect and improve the health of Minnesotans. We measure water quality parameters to help identify conditions that may lead to harmful algae blooms in Minnesota lakes. We provide testing on watershed areas that support wild rice growth to look for conditions that may be harmful to this important Minnesota resource. We use biomonitoring, which identifies and measures potentially toxic chemicals to the body, to help identify groups of people who are at risk of exposure to environmental hazards and then work with partners to reduce or eliminate exposure to those hazards.

(1:58)

The work of the Environmental Laboratory helps public and environmental health professionals, and you, better understand the environment we live in, leading to a better and healthier Minnesota for us all.

(End 2:18)