



Custody Procedures for Sample Shipment and Delivery

Environmental Laboratory Section
Public Health Laboratory Division
Minnesota Department of Health

We encourage sample collectors to contact the Environmental Laboratory before delivering civil or criminal chain-of-custody samples. We appreciate prior notice before the sampling event occurs so that we can provide advice about sampling, collection, storage, and transport.

- Please contact the Environmental Laboratory Operations Unit at (651) 201-5300 or send an email to: health.PHL-Environmental-Lab@state.mn.us

If an emergency arises that endangers public safety, please call the Minnesota State Duty Officer at (651) 649-5451 (for the Twin Cities metro area) or (800) 422-0798 (for Greater Minnesota). The Duty Officer will contact the Environmental Laboratory 24/7 phone when appropriate.

a. Civil investigation

- Containers must be sealed and identified by a custody seal.
- The custody seal identifier must be specified on the chain-of-custody form and in the field log, which should be retained by the client.
- If samples are hand-delivered, the sampling team leader may decide that a custody seal is not necessary, depending on the nature of the particular enforcement investigation.

b. Criminal investigation

- Criminal chain of custody samples must be hand delivered.
- Prior to the sampling event, the sampling team leader should notify the Environmental Laboratory
 - This notification must include:
 - Date and time of collection
 - Expected time of delivery of the samples to the Environmental Laboratory
 - Analyses to be performed (if known)
 - Priority of analyses
 - Investigation case number which will be assigned by the person in charge of the investigation
- When appropriate, the Environmental Laboratory will not be informed of the name of the investigation site.
 - For these samples, the container labels should identify only:
 - Date and time of collection
 - Investigation case number
 - Field number
 - Initials of sampler

c. Environmental Laboratory loading dock hours

- We recommend pre-arranged appointments to deliver civil or criminal chain-of-custody samples so that laboratory staff can be ready for prompt analyses. Nonetheless, even without an appointment, the laboratory is willing to accept chain-of-custody samples at the loading dock from 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM on Mondays through Fridays.
 - Please note: The Public Health Lab is closed on state holidays.
- For information about the Public Health Laboratory Delivery and Visitor Options and a facility map please visit: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/phl/environmental/flyer.pdf>.