

Guidance for Successful Sample Submission to the Public Health Laboratory

All samples submitted for regulatory compliance must meet EPA requirements.

Requirements are listed in the MDH Environmental Laboratory Sample Acceptance Policy, located on [Environmental Laboratory Client Resources \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/envlab/resources.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/envlab/resources.html)

Sample temperature acceptance

- For samples that require thermal preservation, temperatures must be maintained to provide proper thermal preservation per method-specific requirements, found in:
 - Environmental Laboratory Sampling and Analysis Guide, located on [Environmental Laboratory \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/envlab/index.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/envlab/index.html)
- Temperature extremes (hot or cold) will influence the sample temperature during transit.
 - You may need to delay sampling during this time. Please contact your Program or Compliance officer.
- During colder temperatures, you will need to reduce the number of ice packs in the cooler.
 - You may need to insulate the sample container from direct contact with the ice pack.
 - Samples cannot be analyzed if evidence of sample freezing is present at receipt at the lab.
 - Evidence of freezing includes visible ice crystals, or confirmation of freezing by slightly shaking the container.
- During hotter temperatures, you may need to add ice packs or wet ice.
 - If using wet ice, place ice in a leak proof plastic bag.
 - Do *not* insulate the sample containers from direct contact with the cooling material.

Ice packs and sample containers

- Ice packs must be frozen prior to sample collection.
 - Freeze ice packs at least 48 hours prior to sample collection.
 - Freeze ice packs flat for ease of packing.
- Pre-chilling sample containers is helpful whenever possible and holding time permits.
 - Samples shipped at ambient temperatures may not cool properly in transit.

Sample collection

- Sample collectors must consider collection and holding times, temperature requirements, packaging, and transit time prior to shipment for valid sample submission.
- For analyte specific instructions, see the [DWP Sample Collection Procedures homepage \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/samproc.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/samproc.html)¹

Sample packaging

- Arrange samples in cooler lid or cap side up.
- Place fresh frozen cooling material around sample containers.
- Follow the “Samples that require thermal preservation” guidance from above.
- Cover containers and ice packs with bubble wrap or other packing material to keep the cold in and prevent shifting during transit.
- Complete chain of custody, sign, and date.
- Place chain of custody in sealed plastic bag. Place on top of packing material. Cover cooler.
- Seal cooler, place mailing label on parcel, and mail.

Sample shipping

- Consult with your courier service for prompt delivery to the laboratory.
 - For United States Parcel Service (USPS) mail sample to:

**Minnesota Department of Health – PHL
Environmental Sample Receiving
PO BOX 64899
Saint Paul, MN 55164-0899**
 - For other couriers – UPS, FEDEX, SpeeDee mail sample to:

**Minnesota Department of Health – PHL
Environmental Sample Receiving
601 Robert Street North
Saint Paul, MN 55155-2531**
 - For direct delivery to the Public Health Laboratory see [Environmental Laboratory Sample Drop-Off Instructions \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/envlab/dropoff.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/envlab/dropoff.html)

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To obtain this information in a different format, call: 651-201-4700.

¹ For certain contaminant groups (e.g., IOCs, SOCs, VOCs), thermal preservation requirements in these procedures meet the most restrictive requirements within the group. All analyte-specific temperature requirements are listed in the Environmental Laboratory Sampling and Analysis Guide linked on page one of this document.