Total Coliform Sample Collection Tips for Community Public Water Systems

Follow these tips to avoid rejected samples and violations and to improve identification of any contamination sources.

Sample Site Selection Tips

- Collect total coliform samples at sites that are representative of water quality throughout the distribution system. Notify your MDH District Engineer when updating your list of sample sites.

- Use easily accessible sites, such as sites with 24/7 access, if possible.

- Spread sites throughout the distribution system.
  - Divide your system into segments and choose sites from each area
  - Use sites in different pressure zones
  - Use sites in areas that serve sensitive populations (e.g. immunocompromised, elderly people)
  - Use sites fed by different treatment points and storage tanks

- Use sites that have available upstream and downstream sites within 5 service connections. Avoid dead-end sites.

- Sample from taps that are not susceptible to contamination. Avoid bathrooms, outside taps, or taps close to the ground.

- Use sites that get regular use. Avoid seasonal sites or large diameter service connections that are not used regularly. Avoid dead-end sites.

When to Take Samples

- Collect samples at regular time intervals throughout the month.
  - If your system serves less than 4,900 persons and only uses groundwater: You may collect all required samples on a single day. The samples must be taken from different sites.
  - You may use the same site location more than once a month. If you use the same site, samples should be collected at least one week apart.
  - You can collect more samples than required by the federal Safe Drinking Water Act.
  - If you rotate sample sites throughout the month or quarter:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Samples You Take</th>
<th>Recommended Number of Sites to Use for Sampling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 sample/quarter</td>
<td>2-4 sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-5 samples/month</td>
<td>5+ sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 samples per month</td>
<td>5-10 sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-20 samples per month</td>
<td>10+ sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-50 samples per month</td>
<td>10-35 sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50+ samples per month</td>
<td>25+ sites</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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