

**Vermont Department of Health Laboratory**  
Physical: 359 South Park Drive, Colchester, VT 05446  
Mailing: PO Box 1125, Burlington, VT 05402-1125  
1-800-660-9997 (VT only) or 1-802-338-4724

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR COLLECTION AND PACKAGING OF WATER SAMPLES FOR  
RECREATIONAL WATER TESTING (KIT SW)**

**THIS KIT IS NOT TO BE USED FOR DRINKING WATER TESTING**

The kit should contain:

- One labeled 100-milliliter sterile bottle with sodium thiosulfate preservative. The kit may be stored at room temperature until needed.
- One "**Water Sample Collection Information Form**" (Chem 202)
- One cardboard outer container with mailing label
- One "**Guidelines for Mailing and Shipping Water Bacteria Kits**" (Admin 978).

**Testing is recommended within 6-24 hours of collection for optimal results, but testing must begin within 30 hours of collection.**

**PLEASE READ INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY BEFORE COLLECTING SAMPLE**

Please note the expiration date of the sample collection bottle, which is stamped on the label affixed to the cover of the cardboard mailing container and the cover of the inner sample collection bottle. **DO NOT USE OUTDATED COLLECTION BOTTLES.** Expired kits and paperwork should be returned to the Vermont Department of Health Laboratory for free replacement.

To comply with postal regulations and ensure the safety of laboratory personnel and those involved in the transport of sample and to maintain integrity of the sample, the VT Department of Health Laboratory will accept for testing only those samples that are packaged according to the instructions below.

**Instructions**

**Collection of Sample:**

1. For swimming areas, collect samples at locations and times of greatest bather use. It is recommended that sampling be done on a weekly basis. At beaches, greater than 300 feet long, more than one sample is recommended to obtain representative data. Alternate sampling sites may be considered based on geographical features of the beach, potential contamination sources and bather usages.
2. **PRINT DATE AND TIME OF COLLECTION ON THE TOP OF THE SAMPLE BOTTLE. PRINT LAST NAME AND PHONE NUMBER ON THE SIDE LABEL OF THE BOTTLE. If you are sampling from more than one location in each swimming area, please also label each bottle with the location.**
3. The paper seal on the sample collection bottle should be intact. If the seal is not intact, please contact the Vermont Department of Health Laboratory for a replacement bottle.
4. Wade out into the water to a depth of 3 feet. Remove the sample bottle cap.
5. Holding the sample bottle near its base, plunge the inverted bottle below the surface of the water to a depth of 1 foot. The bottle should be directed toward the current, if present and away from the sampler. If there is no

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- current (e.g. in a lake), create a current by pushing the bottle forward in a direction away from the hand. If the collector is sampling from a boat, obtain samples from the upside stream of the boat.
6. Position the mouth of the bottle into the current away from the hand of the sampler and tilt the bottle slightly upwards to allow air to exit and fill the bottle. Remove the bottle from the water and pour off a small amount to allow for proper mixing prior to analysis. At least **100 ml of water** is necessary for testing. Use the mark on the side of the sampling bottle as a guide.
  7. Replace the screw cap on the bottle and tighten firmly to prevent leakage.
  8. Fill out the requisition form completely.

**THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS REQUIRED TO ENSURE ACCURATE AND EFFICIENT PROCESSING OF THE SPECIMEN AND REPORTING OF TEST RESULTS.**

- \* Date of sample collection
- \* Time of sample collection (note a.m. or p.m.)
- \* Location of sample collection (i.e. town beach location, including physical address)
- \* Sampler name and day telephone number

**(\*\* Please note: Date and time of collection must be provided in order for the sample to be tested)**

9. Place the sample bottle and completed Water Sample Collection Form in the cardboard mailer and screw the cap on tightly. Try to keep the sample cool and out of direct sunlight (**Do not freeze**).

**Shipment of Sample and Test Result Turnaround Time:**

1. The sample can be shipped at room temperature or chilled by fastest means possible. Please see “**Guidelines for Mailing and Shipping Water Bacteria Kits**” (Admin 978). **Testing is recommended within 6 and 24 hours of collection for optimal results, but must begin within 30 hours of collection.**
2. Samples must be received by 4:30 p.m. on regular workdays for testing to begin the same day. Results for samples received by 4:30 p.m. are available after 3 p.m. the following workday.
3. Test results for samples received Friday will not be routinely available until the following Monday.

**The sample will be rejected if the sample is greater than 30 hours old upon receipt at the laboratory.**

**The sample may be rejected if:**

- \* Date and time of sample collection is missing on the specimen and form
- \* Sampler name is missing on the form
- \* Sample collection bottle has expired (see date on bottle label)
- \* Sample volume is less than 100 ml.
- \* Sample is submitted in a bottle other than the bottle supplied with the VDHL Kit.

If you have any comments or questions regarding these instructions, please call one of the telephone numbers listed on the front of this form. Thank you.