

Sample Hold Times and Shipping Advice

Analyzing drinking water samples must occur shortly after sampling. Discuss mailing options with your shipper before collecting your sample.

What are sample hold times?

Holding time is the allowed time from sample collection until analysis.

Coliform Bacteria

The holding time for bacteriological samples is **30 hours** from the time of collection to the start of laboratory analysis.



Nitrate and Nitrite

Nitrate and nitrite samples have **48 hours** from the time of collection to the start of laboratory analysis.

Please contact your laboratory for more information on holding times and special instructions for collecting nitrate and nitrite samples.



When the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene (WSLH) receives a sample past the hold time, they send out a replacement kit for you to collect another sample. If you are using a private lab, please contact them directly if you need additional testing supplies.

Note: If the lab receives the sample late, the compliance period for the sample remains unchanged.

If you are unable to collect the sample by the due date, you receive a monitoring violation and need to issue a public notice informing your customers that you have missed a sampling deadline. Missed samples may increase your monitoring requirements. Contact your DNR representative for more information.

When is the sample due?

Verify the time period the sample is due on the slip before taking the samples. The lab slip lists the dates to collect the sample between in the center of the lab slip. Collecting samples earlier in the compliance period provides you with time to resample if there is a lab accident or if the sample fails to arrive at the lab on time.

See below for an example of **monthly**, **quarterly**, and **annual** coliform bacteria compliance periods.

Special Instructions:	
Collect sample between: <u>09/01/19</u> and <u>09/30/19</u> Monthly	SAMPLES MUST BE ANALYZED WITHIN 30 HOURS OF COLLECTION. SEE SAMPLING INSTRUCTIONS ON BACK

Special Instructions:	
Collect sample between: <u>07/01/19</u> and <u>09/30/19</u> Quarterly	SAMPLES MUST BE ANALYZED WITHIN 30 HOURS OF COLLECTION. SEE SAMPLING INSTRUCTIONS ON BACK

Special Instructions:	
Collect sample between: <u>01/01/19</u> and <u>12/31/19</u> Annual	SAMPLES MUST BE ANALYZED WITHIN 30 HOURS OF COLLECTION. SEE SAMPLING INSTRUCTIONS ON BACK

What are my shipping options?

Below are some shipping options if you chose to mail your samples to a laboratory. Please check with your shipping vendor to select the shipping method that will deliver your sample to the lab within the required timeframe. Confirm the arrival time of your package at the lab to avoid the need to resample.

The use of overnight delivery does not guarantee the arrival of the sample at the lab on time nor does it guarantee the lab will start testing in time to meet the holding time requirement. You may still need to collect another sample to fulfill your monitoring requirements.

Commercial Delivery Service Option	Phone Number
Dunhams	800-236-7127
Federal Express	800-463-3339
Spee-Dee	715-341-4960
United Parcel Services (UPS)	800-742-5877
US Postal Service	608-246-1220

What general shipping advice is available?



- Collect samples early in the week.
- Collect samples as late as possible in the day before shipment.
- Check with your local post office or commercial carrier to determine the estimated delivery time to the laboratory.
- Always use a shipper that ships the same day.
- Most shippers provide a next day delivery option.
- Avoid Fridays and busy holiday periods. The excess mail load increases the chance of samples arriving at the lab past the **30-hour limit** for coliform bacteria.
- Most labs are not open and do not have staff available to receive or analyze samples on the weekends.

What are my laboratory options?

There are two options available for sample analyzation. You can use the **Wisconsin State Lab of Hygiene (WSLH)** or a **Safe Drinking Water Act certified private laboratory**.

What should I know about using the WSLH?

The WSLH mails out sample kits to most existing public water systems prior to the start of the monitoring period. Samples that will be analyzed at the WSLH can be dropped off or shipped. However, the WSLH is not open to the public on weekends or holidays.



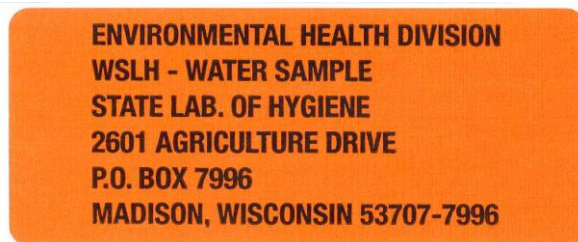
[Click here](#) to view WSLH locations, receiving hours, and information on holiday closures.

Sample kits from the WSLH include two labels for mailing samples.

- The white label with red lettering is for use with commercial delivery services such as Federal Express



- The orange label with black lettering is for use with the US Postal Service



Note: Some Wisconsin regions are standard two-day delivery to the WSLH. For other areas, priority only guarantees arrival within three days, and most arrive in one to two days. Contact the US Postal Service for more information.

What should I know about using a Private Lab?

Private labs across the state can analyze your samples. Labs must be Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) certified for the test they perform. All SDWA labs including the WSLH charge a fee for the nitrate analysis. In addition, private labs charge a fee for coliform tests, but they may be the better option. The use of a private or local lab allows the sampler to take the sample to the lab site on the same day it was collected. This action ensures the lab receives the sample within the allowed time. Contact your private lab directly for questions on delivery and hours.

[Click here](#) for a list that includes laboratories certified to analyze coliform bacteria for public water systems in Wisconsin to comply with SDWA regulations.

[Click here](#) for a list of laboratories SDWA certified for chemical testing. Nitrate and nitrite will be listed as a parameter with the EPA method number for labs that are approved to perform these tests.

The certified laboratories list is updated at least twice annually. If you are unable to find a local laboratory or are interested in more current information, please call the Laboratory Certification Registration Program at 608-267-7633 or send an e-mail to DNRLabCert@Wisconsin.gov.

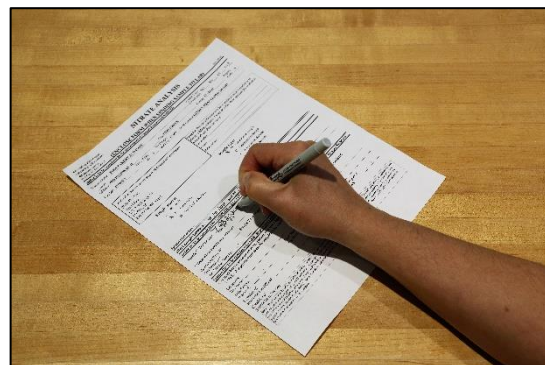
What are common reasons for sample rejection when shipped?

One of the biggest reasons for rejected samples is the sample does not arrive at the lab within the required holding time. Sampling later in the day and close to the time the package will leave the shipping facility decreases the package transit time. For iced samples a shorter shipping time leaves less time for ice to melt and exposure of a sample to ice.



Two common reasons for rejected nitrate and nitrite samples are the ice melted allowing the sample to get too warm or the sample froze. If possible, avoid collecting samples during extremely warm or extremely cold time periods. Placing the nitrate sample bottle towards the top of the bag of ice may also decrease the likelihood of a sample freezing in transit.

Another reason for rejection is failing to include the collection date and time on the test request form or lab slip. This makes it impossible to determine if the sample meets the hold time requirements and the lab will be unable to analyze the sample.



WSLH and UPS are working to set up a next day shipping program for shipping to difficult areas of the state to help avoid shipping issues. More information will be added once the program is available.

For more information regarding Transient Non-community Public Drinking Water, please visit our website <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/DrinkingWater/TNownerOperator.html> or contact the DNR Service Center Desk for assistance at (888) 936-7463