

**THE 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  
IRRIGATION WATER TESTING (KIT AG)**

**DO NOT USE THIS KIT FOR WATER TESTING WHEN POTABILITY IS REQUIRED  
(e.g., drinking, hand washing, washing of produce, or surfaces used for food processing)**

The kit should contain:

- One labeled 100-milliliter sterile bottle with sodium thiosulfate preservative. Kits can 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)

**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 or side 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 **DO NOT USE OUTDATED COLLECTION BOTTLES.** Expired kits and paperwork should be returned to the Vermont Department of Health Laboratory for free replacement.

In order 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. Avoid sampling surface water after a heavy rain or during high flow as this may over-represent usual bacterial levels. Sample under conditions during which you would normally irrigate.
2. The paper seal on the sample collection bottle should be intact. If the label is not intact, please contact the Health Department Laboratory for a replacement bottle.
3. Collect the water from the pump discharge vent or the sample shunt valve. If this is not possible, collect surface water directly from the body of water. Collect the sample from shore by attaching the sample bottle to a pole and submerging the bottle to the level of the intake pipe. Avoid wading and stirring up residue during collection. Water from a well may be collected from a faucet where the irrigation hose attaches.  
**Do not touch the mouth of the bottle.**
4. Fill the bottle to above the 100-milliliter (ml) line on the bottle. 100 ml of water is required for the test procedure.
5. Replace the screw cap on the bottle and tighten firmly to prevent leakage.

6. **PRINT DATE AND TIME OF COLLECTION ON THE TOP OF THE PAPER LABEL. PRINT LAST NAME AND PHONE NUMBER ON THE SIDE LABEL OF THE BOTTLE. If you are sampling from more than one site please also label each bottle with the location.**
7. Fill out the requisition form (Chem 202) 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. pond, stream; include 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)**

8. Place the sample bottle and completed Water Sample Collection Form in the cardboard mailer and screw the cap on tightly. It is best 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 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 p.m. on regular workdays for testing to begin the same day. Results for samples received by 4 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.**

**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.