

How to Collect Water Samples for Schools – Kit SL

Follow these steps to collect water samples to test your school's drinking water for lead. A **first draw** sample tests the water that comes out of the tap after a period of inactivity. A **flush sample** collects water after the tap has been running for 30 seconds.

Prepare Ahead of Time

- Plan to **collect all first draw samples first, then go back and take all flush samples**. Please **do not** collect samples the first day after a weekend, holiday or vacation.
- Test all taps that are listed on your Water Sample Worksheet. You will have one bottle for each line on the worksheet. If a tap has a filter attached to it, leave the filter in place to take both the first draw and flush samples.
- **Before collecting the water sample, do not use any water** from the specific tap (for example, kitchen sink) that you will be testing **for 8 to 18 hours**.
Tip: collect the water first thing in the morning.



Collect First Draw Samples

1. Go to the tap first. On the Water Sample Worksheet, find the row for the **first draw sample** that matches the description of that tap. Then find the bottle that matches the Lab ID # from that row.
2. All first draw bottles will have a **FIRST DRAW sticker** on them.
3. Remove the cap making sure you do not touch the inside of the cap or mouth of the bottle.
4. Before turning on the water, place the opened sample bottle below the tap.
5. Slowly turn on cold water and bring it to a normal flow rate, similar to how you would fill a glass of water. **Catch all the water in the sample bottle** – do not let any water go down the drain.
6. Fill the sample bottle to the line and screw the cap on tightly.
7. Write the Collection Date and Collection Time (note AM or PM) on the Water Sample Worksheet in the space provided.



Collect Flush Samples

1. Go back and collect all flush samples.
2. Go to the tap first. On the Water Sample Worksheet, find the row for the **flush sample** that matches the description of that tap. Then find the bottle that matches the Lab ID # from that row.
3. All flush bottles have a **FLUSH sticker** on them.
4. Remove the cap making sure you do not touch the inside of the cap or mouth of the bottle.
5. Run cold water at **low flow for 30 seconds**. Turn up to a normal flow rate to take the sample, similar to how you would fill a glass of water.



6. Fill the sample bottle to the line and screw the cap on tightly.
7. Write the Collection Date and Collection Time (note AM or PM) on the Water Sample Worksheet in the space provided.

Return Bottles and Forms to the Lab

- Put the bottles and forms in a box.
- Follow the “Sample Return” instructions included with your kit.



Frequently Asked Questions

How can I make sure I send a sample that is acceptable for testing?

Sometimes samples need to be “qualified,” which means the sample doesn’t meet all the testing requirements. Here are a few **things you can do to submit an acceptable drinking water sample**:

- Submit your sample in the water sample bottle provided by the lab.
- Don’t send a sample that has a strong chlorine smell – too much chlorine can interfere with the test.
- Make sure to fill out the highlighted sections on the Water Sample Worksheet.
- Be sure the sample gets to the lab within one week from the time you filled the water sample bottle.

In what order do we need to take our samples?

To get accurate results, take first draw samples from all taps first, and then go back around and take flush samples. Start with taps that are closest to where the water comes into the building. If you have taps on multiple floors, start with the taps on the lower floors before moving up.

What do I need to do if I’m collecting follow-up samples?

BEFORE you collect the follow-up water samples, for 3 weeks, turn on the remediated taps to run water through the new fixtures or plumbing for a few minutes twice per day. Please **do not** collect samples the first day after a weekend, holiday or vacation.

How do we test combination taps, like combination bottle fillers and water fountains or combination sinks and water fountains?

If you have a combination water fixture, take a first draw sample from each tap, but **only one flush sample** from either tap.

Questions?

If you have questions about collecting or returning samples, please call the **Vermont Department of Health Lab at 802-338-4724**.

More information and instructional videos are available online: healthvermont.gov/lead-test-schools.