

How to Collect Water Samples

Volatile Organic Compounds - KIT OA/OB (EPA 524.2) - Regulated Systems

It is very important to read all the instructions before collecting your water in bottles and submitting them to the laboratory. These instructions are intended for **regulated systems**.

Your kit comes with

- Three (3) glass screw top vials: 40 mL with ascorbic acid preservative inside
- One (1) screw top vial with water inside: 40 mL and labeled with orange tape. Please do NOT open. This container must be returned intact with your samples and is the trip blank.
- Three (3) small vials of diluted hydrochloric acid
- One (1) disposable transfer pipette
- Ice packs, unfrozen
- Cooler, for returning samples

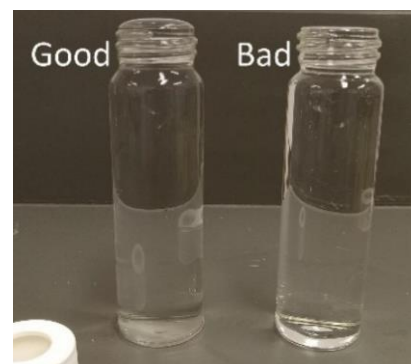


Prepare

- Put the ice packs in the freezer ahead of time. It may take 2-3 days for them to freeze completely.
- Do not rinse the vials. Do not touch the inside of the caps or mouths of the bottles or vials.
- **Make sure the lab is accepting samples** the day you want to drop them off before taking your samples.
- We recommend that you wear protective gloves while collecting your samples.
- Wash and sanitize your hands before taking your samples.

Collect Samples

- Samples for **Kit OA** must be taken at the point of entry to the distribution system, for **Kit OB** refer to the sampling plan for the WSID. Fill all 3 vials at the same location:
 - a) If the system is served by **surface water** the sample must be taken after any application of treatment.
 - b) If the system is served by **ground water** the sample must be taken at a location representative of each source after any application of treatment.
- Remove any faucet or spigot strainers. Let cold water run for 3-5 minutes at full flow before taking sample. Reduce the flow to about the width of your little finger.
- Carefully remove cap. While holding the vial at an angle, slowly fill vial with water until it is mostly full. Do not over-fill or rinse vial since the preservative will be lost. Do not allow inside of cap or bottle to be touched by any object.



VOCs KIT OA/OB – How to Collect Water Samples (continued)

- Pour one vial of hydrochloric acid into your sample vial. You may use the pipette to transfer the acid.
- Continue to slowly add water dropwise until it can be seen above the rim of the bottle. This will eliminate an air pocket. If air bubbles are present the sample can not be tested.
- Screw the cap on securely. Check for air bubbles by turning vial over and tap the cap; double-check by looking through the bottom. If there are air bubbles, re-open the vial and add a few more drops of water. Do not empty the vial and do not significantly over-fill bottle since the preservative will be lost.

Return Samples to the Laboratory

- Complete the **Water Sample Collection Information Form** including date and time of collection and return it with sample containers to the Laboratory. Ensure the sample bottles are labelled with your name and sample location.
- Put the tightly closed vials in the cooler with the completed forms. We suggest putting the forms inside a sealed plastic bag to prevent damage.
- Keep all samples together, packaged in the cooler provided to prevent breakage. Arrange frozen ice packs around the foam insert.
- Do not mail your sample on a Friday or the day before a state holiday.
- Read **Sample Return Instructions** for ways to get your sample back to the lab. Visit HealthVermont.gov/drinking-water-sample-drop-information for online sample drop off information.



Frequently Asked Questions

When can I expect my test results?

You should receive your results within three weeks. To avoid mail delays and get your results by email, write your email address on the Water Sample Collection Information Form.

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

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

- Ensure no air bubbles or head space is present in your vials after sample collection. This is the most common reason for sample rejection.
- Be sure the sample gets to the laboratory as soon as possible.
- Ensure that your sample is properly preserved; do not rinse out or overfill vials.
- Use frozen ice packs and the cooler to keep the temperature of your water sample less than 42 °F (6° Celsius) – cold, but never frozen – until it reaches the laboratory.
- If you have questions about these instructions, call us at 800-660-9997 or 802-338-4724.