

Iron and Sodium FAQ

Vermont Department of Health Lab (VDHL)

Process Overview

- Due to recent instrument failure, we cannot analyze for iron or sodium.
- Any kit with iron or sodium must have those metals sent to another certified lab for testing. This includes kits: IA, ID, and C.
- We continue to sell kits as per usual and are alerting customers that iron and sodium will be performed by an outside laboratory.
- Results from the outside laboratory will be communicated to each customer by VDHL.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: Why can't you test for iron and sodium?

A: We had an instrument fail unexpectedly. Although we perform preventive maintenance on all of our instrumentation, sometimes failures do occur. We are working on replacing this instrument, which will take some time.

Q: Did this instrument failure affect previously reported results?

A: This had no impact on prior results.

Q: Will the other results in the kit be affected?

A: The other tests in the kit will be analyzed and reported as usual. There is no compromise to the quality of the results reported.

Q: How long will this last?

A: We expect to replace this instrument as soon as possible. However, due to global supply chain issues, we anticipate this will take about a year.

Q: How long will it take to get my results?

A: The turnaround time for the contracted laboratory is about the same as ours. For kits sold after 11/3/21, we do not anticipate a significant delay in reporting. However, it will take a couple of extra days for us to receive, and mail results out to our customers.

Q: Will I need to pay anything extra?

A: No, the laboratory is covering the cost of testing at the contracted laboratory.

Q: I need my results ASAP; can you expedite my sample?

A: Unfortunately, we cannot expedite samples.

Q: What are the implications of not having iron and sodium tested?

A: Per our Environmental Health outreach materials:

Iron: iron is an essential element and does not generally cause health effects. However, high amounts can cause a metallic taste and stain clothing, sinks, toilets, and bathtubs. The limit in water is 0.3 mg/L.

Sodium: sodium can occur naturally in water. High levels of sodium can make water taste salty and corrode metal piping. Salt from road de-icing can cause high sodium levels in wells near roads. The limit in drinking water is 250 mg/L.

If you are testing iron or sodium to fulfill permit requirements, you may not be in compliance if you choose not to test iron and/or sodium.

Q: I don't want to have my sample sent to the contracted laboratory; can you cancel my test?

A: We can cancel the iron and sodium from your order, if requested. However, our kit is a panel, and we are offering the full kit in good faith. If you choose to opt out of some of the tests, we are unable to prorate the kit.

If you'd like to cancel all the tests, please return your kit and paperwork with a note and we can issue a full refund.

Q: Which method does the other lab use? Is it certified and accredited? Will DEC accept my data?

A: The method used will be EPA 200.7 (Plasma-atomic emission spectrometry). We are required to send the samples to a laboratory that is TNI-accredited and certified to test drinking water from Vermont. The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation should accept this data.