



Feidhmeannas Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

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Directions for Taking Water Samples for Analysis

- Samples must be **booked in** with the Water Chemistry or Microbiology Laboratory **prior** to submission and are accepted on a Monday/Tuesday only.
- Sample must be submitted to the laboratory **before 1.30p.m.**
- Only sample bottles supplied by the laboratory, or the local Environmental Health Officer, will be accepted.
- **Samples should not be more than 6 hours old.** Exceptions may be made for samples from distant locations. **This must be agreed with the laboratory in advance.**
- Samples must be stored and transported in a cool place (not frozen) out of direct sunlight.
- Filled bottles should be held in an upright position when being transported.

Sample Types

Analyses of a variety of different types of water are performed at the laboratory.

Drinking Water (Potable Water)

The determination of fitness of water for human consumption can be made only on the basis of a full analysis consisting of chemical and microbiological parameters. For this analysis two bottles of water are required which constitute one sample. In special circumstances, (such as in repeat testing or when only specific parameters are of interest) it may be appropriate to carry out chemical or microbiological testing only. In this case only one appropriate bottle will be required.

- Samples of drinking water are normally taken from a kitchen tap or another tap supplied directly from the water source (public supply main, well or boring).
- Samples of water supplied from tanks (e.g. attic tanks and immersion heating cylinders) are not normally suitable for analysis. A group scheme water supply may be supplied via a tank and in this case a tank may form an integral part of the drinking water distribution system and the water will be suitable for analysis.
- Samples of water from hot taps are not drinking water samples and are not suitable for testing as drinking water.
- Samples of public water supplies which are passed through privately controlled treatments e.g. filters and softeners should be sampled prior to these treatments.
- Owners of small private water supplies who have installed some form of water treatment should inform the laboratory at the time of booking in the sample and agree the point at which water is to be tested.

Water other than Drinking Water

At the time of booking in the sample, the laboratory must be fully informed of the nature of the sample to be submitted so that appropriate testing may be applied.

Taking the Sample:

- Precautions:**
- Microbiological bottle (500 ml) :
 - Do not rinse.
 - Do not touch the top of the bottle or inside of the cap against any surface.
 - Open only immediately prior to filling.
 - Chemical bottle (1, 2.5 litre) :
 - Rinse with the water to be tested immediately prior to filling.

a) From tap and pump

- Tap should be clean, free from all attachments and in good repair.
- Clean the inside and outside of the tap with a clean swab moistened in sanitising fluid.
- Run the water to waste at a steady rate for 2-3 minutes.
- Fill each bottle to approximately 2-3 cm from the top.
- Replace the cap immediately and tighten.

b) From stream, river or well

- Remove cap and retain in one hand.
- Hold base of bottle with other hand and plunge neck downwards below surface to a depth of 30 cm approximately.
- Tilt bottle so that neck points slightly upwards and allow to fill completely.
- Remove bottle and replace cap immediately