

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS DRINKING WATER LABORATORY



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Q: **How do I pay for testing Drinking Water samples?**

A: Make your check or money order payable to State of Michigan.
The laboratory does not accept Cash. Credit/debit cards can only be used to pay invoices from an established DWL account.

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Q: **What should I have my water tested for?**

A: Homeowners should contact their [Local Health Department](#) for a recommendation of what to have their water tested for. EPA recommends that private wells be tested for coliforms and nitrate/nitrite at a minimum.

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Q: **Can I use any container to collect my water sample?**

A: No. You must use a sample bottle that is appropriate for the testing that will be done on your water sample because preservatives and the volume of sample required are specific to the test. Additionally, DEQ sampling units have been quality control checked for specific analyses. A list of required bottles or Units along with test codes can be found on the Michigan DEQ [Drinking Water Laboratory Testing Fee Schedule](#). If you have questions, contact the Michigan DEQ Drinking Water Laboratory at DEQ-RRD-DW-Bottles@michigan.gov or call 517-335-8184.

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Q: **How do I order bottles for collecting my water sample?**

A: You can order bottles for collecting your water sample by emailing the [Bottle Order form](#) to DEQ-RRD-DW-Bottles@michigan.gov, fax to 517-335-8562 or call 517-335-8184. Many Local Health Departments also have a supply of DEQ sample bottles, forms and mailing materials.

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Q: **Can I send my DEQ water sample bottle to any Laboratory?**

A: If your sample bottle came from the Michigan DEQ Drinking Water Laboratory you **must** return your water sample to the Michigan DEQ Drinking Water Laboratory at 3350 N. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Lansing, Michigan 48906.

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Q: **How do I collect my water sample?**

A: Instructions for collecting your water sample can be found on the back of the [Request for Water Analysis form](#). Find your sample bottle or Unit # on the back of the form. Follow the instructions to collect your water sample. Different bottles have different collection requirements based on testing methods and preservatives that may be included in your bottle. For additional questions contact the Michigan DEQ Drinking Water Laboratory at DEQ-RRD-DW-Bottles@michigan.gov or call 517-335-8184.

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Q: Does my water sample need to be refrigerated after I collect it?

A: Maybe. If you received an ice pack with your sample bottle, please ensure that the ice pack is frozen prior to returning your water sample to the Laboratory. Some tests require thermal preservation upon sample collection. Do not freeze the sample prior to submission. Samples received frozen are not acceptable for testing.

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Q: How many Request for Analysis forms do I need?

A: A separate form is required for each sample collection point, address or different collection date/time. If you are submitting multiple samples indicate a unique identifier on the sample bottle label so we are able to match the Request for Analysis form with the corresponding sample bottle (i.e. well number, address, sampling point etc.).

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Q: Do I really need to indicate the date AND time my water sample was collected?

A: YES. You **must** indicate the collection date and time (circle am or pm) for your water sample on the Request for Water Analysis form. Testing methods have an EPA maximum allowable holding time from the time your water sample was collected until the time of testing. Without the collection date and time, it is not possible to determine if your water sample can be tested within the holding time.

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Q: What is a holding time?

A: Testing methods have an EPA maximum allowable holding time from the time your water sample was collected until the time of testing. Results from samples analyzed past holding time may be less accurate. The holding time is indicated on the bottle label.

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Q: I'm confused. There are two boxes on the Request for Water Analysis form indicating 1) Do not analyze my sample if received past the EPA hold time and 2) Analyze my sample if received past the EPA hold time. How do I choose? Or, do I even need to check one of these boxes?

A: Yes, you should check only one of these boxes. For compliance purposes check the first box indicating do not analyze my sample if received past the EPA hold time. Results from testing done past the EPA hold time may not be acceptable for compliance and you may need to resample at additional cost. For all samples it is best to have your test done within the EPA recommended holding time for the most accurate results. However, there may be certain circumstances that you want or need your sample to be tested past the hold time; in this case check the second box. Results may still have value.

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Q: I need to test my Drinking Water for E. coli. What test code should I use?

A: Please use the test code "B". This test analyzes drinking water for Total Coliforms AND E.coli.

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Q: I want to bring in my surface water sample, (beach, pond, stream etc.), for E. coli testing. When can I bring this to the Laboratory? What is the EPA hold time for surface water samples?

A: Surface water samples can be delivered to the Laboratory Monday thru Thursday 8:00am - 3:00pm. We do not accept surface water samples on Friday. All surface water samples must be delivered to the laboratory within 6 hours of collection to allow the laboratory to complete the sample within specified EPA hold time criteria (8 hours from time of collection). If you are bringing in large amounts of surface water samples to the Laboratory, please call 517-335-8076 to schedule these in advance.

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Q: If I bring in my sample for drinking water bacteria to the lab in the morning can I get my results the same day?

A: No. Testing for Bacteria requires a 24 hour incubation time to complete the analysis. Results are released twice daily by the DEQ Laboratory to get this critical information to our customers as quickly as possible.

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Q: When can I expect test results for my water sample?

A: You can expect test results for your water sample in 3-10 days after your sample is received at the Laboratory. For fastest reporting, enter your email address on the Request for Water Analysis form to get your test results. First class mail may take an additional 3-4 days due to recent changes in the United States Postal Service.

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Q: Where is the Drinking Water Laboratory located?

A: The Michigan DEQ Drinking Water Laboratory is located at [3350 N. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Lansing, Michigan 48906](#).

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Q: What are your hours and when should I bring in my water sample?

A: The Michigan DEQ Drinking Water Laboratory is open Monday – Friday 8:00am – 5:00pm except holidays. Samples received after 4:30pm may not be processed until the following day. For testing with short holding times, bring your water sample in early in the week to ensure testing is done within EPA hold times.

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Q: What do I need to bring with my water sample if I bring it to the Laboratory in person?

A: You'll need to bring your water sample, completed Request for Water Analysis form, check/money order, and a pictured ID if you bring your sample to the Michigan DEQ Drinking Water Laboratory. Contact the laboratory at 517-335-8184 on the day of delivery to obtain access to the facility. You will be required to show a pictured ID at the gate.

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Q: Do I have to bring my water sample to the Laboratory in person?

A: No. You may send your water sample to the Michigan DEQ Drinking Water Laboratory along with your completed Request for Water Analysis form and check/money order by UPS, FedEx, or USPS. Please be aware that first class mail may take an additional 3-4 days due to recent changes in the United States Postal Service. UPS Ground, Express Mail, or FedEx are recommended for short hold time samples.

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**For additional questions please contact the
Michigan DEQ Drinking Water Lab at 517-335-8184**