

# Sewage Screen Collection/Shipping Guidelines



**Sample:** water (200 mL) collected in a sterile container (for chlorinated water use a container with sodium thiosulfate neutralizer); dual swab of surfaces.

- *Sewage screens are processed Monday – Thursday (8 am - 3 pm) and only until noon on Fridays.*
- *Sewage screens cannot be processed Saturday or the day prior to a holiday.*

## **Method:**

Selective culture for *E. coli*, coliforms, and *Enterococcus* (fecal streptococci); reported as presence/absence of each organism.

## **Collection:**

Sterile screw-top containers and swabs are available from U. S. Micro-Solutions, call 724-853-4047. Do not use “Q-tips” or other cotton swabs intended for personal use; they are not appropriate for environmental sampling.

## Swabs

1. Select a sampling area where fecal contamination is suspected.
  - ▲ *An area between 1 and 4 square inches is recommended for swab sampling.*
2. Wearing gloves, peel down the swab wrapper about 1 inch.
  - ▲ *Apply strict aseptic technique when collecting samples.*
3. Remove the plug from the media tube by twisting; discard the plug.
4. Remove the dual swab from the wrapper and insert it into the media tube.
5. Squeeze the bottom of the tube until the liquid in the sponge wets the swabs.
6. Rub the pre-moistened swabs vigorously over the desired sampling area.
7. Insert the swabs into the media tube and firmly close the cap.
8. Record the sample number on the tube.

## Water

### *Potable Water - Distribution System without attachments:*

1. Select a tap that is supplying water from a service pipe directly connected with the main, and is not, for example, served from a cistern or storage tank.
2. Open tap fully and let water run for 2 minutes or for a time sufficient to permit clearing of the service line.
3. Reduce water flow to permit filling the sample container without splashing. Collect 200 mL of water.
4. Label the sample container with the sample number.

### *Potable Water - Well fitted with a hand pump:*

1. Pump water for about 5-10 minutes or until water temperature has stabilized then fill the sample container without splashing. Collect 200 mL of water.
2. If no pumping machinery is available, collect a sample directly from the well by means of a sterilized bottle fitted with a weight at the base. Take care to avoid contaminating samples. Collect 200 ml of water.
3. Label the sample container with the sample number.

## **Shipping:**

1. Clearly label each sample with a Sample Number and complete the Chain of Custody (COC).
2. Place samples in a Ziploc bag and then in a box with sufficient padding.
3. Insert the completed COC form into a plastic sleeve or Ziploc bag and place in box.
4. Ship samples overnight at ambient temperature Monday through Thursday for receipt within 24 hours of collection.