



160 Veterans Blvd., South Haven, Michigan 49090
PHONE: 269-637-5658 | **TOLL FREE:** 888-685-1628

Food Safety Sampling Instructions

Prior to Sampling:

- 1.) Check to make sure you have all the supplies needed to complete the intended sampling such as the correct number of swabs, sponges, bottles, order forms, etc. Make sure that you have selected the appropriate swab/sponge type for the type of sampling you plan to do.
- 2.) You may wish to fill out some of the information needed on the order forms and bottles ahead of time such as sample sites and microorganisms to be tested. Use of a coding system or Chain of Custody will make the process of filling in forms for large numbers of swabs easier.
- 3.) Immediately prior to sampling wash hands thoroughly with soap and water. Although you may wear gloves or use hand sanitizer during sampling, hand washing is critical and must be done prior to sampling. Putting on gloves with dirty hands will result in dirty gloves. When using gloves a fresh pair must be used after touching any non-sanitized surface or if they become torn or soiled.

Sampling Incoming (potable) Water:

- 1.) Initiate the flow of water and let it run for 2-3 minutes to flush standing water out of the pipes. If the water source has not been used recently you may wish to flush the system for a longer period.
- 2.) If the sample site is in an area where it may be contaminated from splashing, had a hose attached, etc., you may wish to disinfect the faucet/pipe opening prior to sampling. We recommend using a spray bottle filled with a freshly made 10% bleach solution. Spray the outside and inside of the faucet/pipe thoroughly and let stand for at least one minute.
- 3.) Reduce flow to minimize splashing and potential cross-contamination of sample.
- 4.) Sanitize hands or put on a fresh pair of laboratory grade gloves. Hands must be washed prior to sampling. Unwashed hands greatly increase the chances of sample contamination regardless of the use of gloves or hand sanitizers.
- 5.) Remove the seal from the bottle and carefully remove the cap being sure not to touch the inside or rim of the bottle or cap. (This is a very sensitive test and even the slightest bit of cross contamination can result in a false positive). Holding the lid so that the underside is facing away from the running water will minimize the risk of contamination from water splash.
- 6.) Fill the bottle to the 100ml line on the bottle. Filling the bottle above the 100ml line is OK, but samples received with less than 100ml do not contain enough volume to be analyzed.

Micro Enviro Swabs and Sponge Sampling Rev1
Effective Date 10/24/2017
Approved by: SDW

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7.) Carefully replace cap and label the bottle with the date and time.

Sampling Process Water:

- 1.) Remove the seal from the bottle and carefully remove the cap being sure not to touch the inside or rim of the bottle or cap.
- 2.) When sampling a dump tank or flume, submerge the bottle just below the water level and let fill. Avoid collecting leaves, twigs, and other floating debris if possible.
- 3.) Fill the bottle to the 100ml line on the bottle. Avoid washing out the preservative in the bottle. Do not allow the bottle to overflow or be completely submerged.
- 4.) You will need to fill one bottle per pathogen of interest. If you intend to sample the process water for E. coli, HPC, and Fecal Coliform you need to fill three bottles, one for each test.
- 5.) Carefully replace cap and label the bottle with the date and time.

Sampling Environmental Surface Swabs:

It is important to select the appropriate type of swab and buffer for the organisms and method you have chosen. Samples that are taken for presence/absence tests for pathogens and pathogen indicator organisms should be taken with a swab containing HiCap (High Capacity) Neutralizing broth. You will receive these swabs in a blue labeled Whirl bag. Samples that are taken for generic E. coli, or any count method should be taken with a swab containing HiCap broth. If you are unsure which swab you may need, someone in the laboratory should be able to advise you on which swab and buffer is appropriate for your needs. HiCap broth developed specifically for use in food and beverage industry. By neutralizing residual sanitizers on the sampled surface and maintaining the viability of the collected microorganisms for up to 72 hours. HiCap helps prevent false negative test results and facilitates accurate quantification of microorganisms.

Consistent and accurate analytical results require consistent sampling technique. One aspect of sample consistency is sample area. When sampling a flat surface swab an area of 100cm². This may be done by swabbing a 10cm x 10cm square (4in x 4in). You can also sample a rectangular area that covers the same surface area such as 5cm x 20cm. You are not required to swab a square or rectangle, but this is helpful to visualize. Cover the area 3 times: once swabbing in a vertical motion, then with a horizontal motion, and last with a diagonal motion. When sampling oddly shaped or moving surfaces, do your best to swab the area as thoroughly as possible to give yourself the best chance of successfully obtaining a representative sample of the surface in question.

When sampling for counts such as, APC, EB, Total Coliform, or Yeast and Mold, it is especially important to sample consistently. These types of samples are best suited to be taken from flat

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even surfaces from where a uniform sample may be taken. Recommended areas for swabs on these surfaces are the 10cm x 10cm (4in x 4in) square or 1 square foot (12in x 12in). It may be helpful to use a template when sampling these areas. Any templates that are used should be made of materials that can be sterilized. Another option is to use, one time use, disposable templates for taking these samples. NEWAGE Laboratories reports count methods as per swab due to uncontrolled variables in the way different individuals may take the swabs. It is important that a record is kept that identifies the actual area swabbed for these counts. When data is received from the laboratory, the client can then match the count with the area swabbed in house. For example, a report with an APC count of 100 CFU/Swab can be matched with surface area to yield useful data (100 CFU/100cm²).