



Department of Health

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Sample Collection Procedures

Most laboratories will collect, transport, and analyze beach samples if directed. Please contact the laboratory of your choice to make appropriate arrangements. If you choose, you may collect and transport samples to an approved laboratory. If you select this method, the following procedures must be strictly followed:

I. Sample Submission:

- Be sure to notify the laboratory that will be analyzing the samples prior to collection. The laboratory may have special requirements for submission of samples. Samples must be collected in sterile bottles (provided by the laboratory).
- All samples must be submitted with the appropriate sample submission form provided by the laboratory.
- You must indicate on the sample submission form to send a copy of the results to the RI Department of Health Beach Program either by fax @ 222-4775 or email sherry.poucher@health.ri.gov

Note: If a sample exceeds the single sample standard (60 cfu/100ml for saltwater and freshwater), another sample must be collected immediately. Your beach will not re-open until a clean result is reported.

II. Sample Collection:

1. Sampler will complete 1 Chain of Custody form for each sample, to be returned to the laboratory with the samples. Chain of Custody forms provide sample station name, date and time of collection, and sampler's name.
2. The sampler will identify the sample station using visual cues, and per the U.S Environmental Protection Agency's recommendation for beach water sampling, will collect each sample between knee and waist depth (approximately 3-feet), at least one foot below the surface and no closer to the bottom than 1 foot.
3. The sampler will stand away from, and "downstream from" the bottle and will open and close the bottle at sampling depth (i.e., after submerging closed bottle, open, fill and re-close before bringing it to the surface).
4. Sample collectors should use extreme caution to avoid contaminating sample containers by touching the inside of the cap or bottle.
5. Samplers should also take caution not to disturb the bottom sediment while entering the water. Excessive amounts of sediment and benthic material may negatively affect the sample results; often returning inflated bacteriological results.
6. The sampler will fill a pre-labeled, sterile, screw-capped 500mL Nalgene bottle to 90% capacity to be delivered to RIDOH Laboratories. Samples
7. Samples should be submitted by noon, Monday through Thursday, to the RI State Laboratory or other certified laboratory. In no case shall the 6 hr maximum holding time between sample collection and filtration in the laboratory be exceeded (APHA 1995).

III. Sample Location:

- Beaches that are Less than 300 Linear Feet of Shoreline: A minimum of one (1) sample must be collected. If only one (1) sample is collected, it should be taken from the center of that bathing area.
- Beaches that are Between 300 and 700 Linear Feet of Shoreline: A minimum of two (2) water samples must be collected.
- Beaches that are Greater than 700 Linear Feet of Shoreline: A minimum of three (3) water samples must be collected.
- Samples should be collected with approximately equal distances between stations and the ends of the beach.
- Samples should be clearly labeled to indicate which section of the beach the samples were collected (i.e. North/Center/South or East/Center/West).

APHA 1995. American Public Health Association, Water Environment Federation. Standard methods for the examination of water and wastewater, 22.