

COLLECTING A WATER SAMPLE

A how to guide.



Collect the water sample from the well head. If you cannot access the well head, take the sample from a non-swivel faucet (if possible) commonly used for drinking water. Samples may be collected from a swivel faucet or outside faucet but may be contaminated and not reflect the actual water quality. If the well has been disinfected (e.g., chlorinated), the water must be used for 5–7 days¹ before the water can be sampled.



1. Use the water collection kit supplied by the lab. Most will provide detailed instructions and sample bottles for various tests. Not all tests use the same type of bottle, amount of water or preservative. If no information is provided, follow these guidelines. Remove screens, aerators or other attachments and clean the tap with alcohol or a sanitizing wipe prior to sampling.



2. After sanitizing, run the water for three to five minutes before sampling. While the water is running, complete any necessary paperwork and carefully open the sample bottle. Do not touch the lip or inside of bottle. Do not rinse the bottle out or discard any powder that may be inside.



3. For coliform collection, adjust the water to get a slow and steady flow and fill past the 100 ml fill line. Do not fill past the 120 ml line. If there are no fill lines, and for all other test collections, leave one inch of space between the water level and the lid. **Secure lid and label the bottle.** If no label or codes are already on the sample bottles, please label yourself (where sample was collected, well ID, and date and time of collection).

4 Complete the lab form. Type or print legibly. Include all information asked for on the form.

5 Mail or deliver samples to the lab as soon as possible. The lab must receive the samples within 24 hours of collection. If mailing, put the samples in a small cooler with ice. If delivering, store the samples in the refrigerator and place on ice during delivery. This is especially important for bacteria and nitrate samples.

6 If you are testing for a real estate transaction (RET), a non-biased third party should collect the samples. Please see [OAR 333-061-0335](http://www.oregon.gov/oha/ohahd/DrinkingWater/Programs/RET/RET%20Form.pdf) for more information. You must send a copy of the lab results and the [RET form](#) to the Oregon Health Authority's Drinking Water Program. Test results should also be sent to the prospective buyer within 90 days.

Drinking Water Results



Test results will usually be ready one to three business days after the lab receives the samples. Some tests (e.g., arsenic) may take up to 10 business days or longer dependent on analysis type.



Copies of the lab reports are sent to the persons/company listed on the lab paperwork and kept by the lab.

For a real estate transaction, see step 6.

Your test may not be valid if:

- The water sample is too old.
- Information provided on the lab form is incomplete.
- Sample container wasn't labeled.
- Not enough water was taken (step3).
- Sample wasn't kept at proper temperature.

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For more domestic well safety tips and information, visit www.healthoregon.org/wells

For more information on Drinking Water Services, visit www.healthoregon.org/dwp

¹Five days are required for real estate transactions; seven are recommended for more accurate test results.

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