

DRINKING WATER LABORATORY

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) Drinking Water Laboratory, was established under Michigan’s Safe Drinking Water Act and offers services for the analysis of drinking water quality. The following are questions commonly asked about the Drinking Water Laboratory.

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DRINKING WATER TESTING

1. Why should I have my water tested and what should I have it tested for?

There are many different reasons to get your water tested at a laboratory. People get their drinking water tested when they notice an unusual color or odor, when they are selling or buying a home, and when a new well is installed or an old well or well pump is maintained.

Homeowners should contact their Local Health Department for a recommendation of what to have their water tested for. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) recommends that private wells be tested for coliforms and nitrate/nitrite, at a minimum.

SAMPLE CONTAINERS/BOTTLES

2. Can I use any container to collect my water sample?

No. You must use a sample bottle that has the right preservatives and holds the right volume for the test that will be done on the water sample. EGLE 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 [EGLE's Drinking Water Laboratory Testing Fee Schedule](#). Questions about required bottles and test codes can be directed to EGLE-RRD-DWCustServ@michigan.gov or 517-335-8184.

3. How do I get the sample bottles?

You can order bottles for collecting your water sample by emailing the Bottle Order Form to EGLE-RRD-DW-Bottles@michigan.gov, or call 517-335-8184. You may also pick up bottles at the laboratory, just call ahead. Many local health departments also have a supply of EGLE sample bottles, forms and shipping materials.

4. Can I send my EGLE water sample bottle to any laboratory?

If the EGLE sample bottle came from the EGLE Drinking Water Laboratory or your local health department, the sample must be submitted to the EGLE Drinking Water Laboratory.

SAMPLE COLLECTION

5. How do I collect my water sample?

Instructions for collecting your water sample are included with your sample bottle and the [Request for Water Analysis 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 EGLE Drinking Water Laboratory at EGLE-RRD-DWCustServ@michigan.gov or call 517-335-8184.

6. Does my water sample need to be refrigerated after I collect it?

Some tests require thermal preservation upon sample collection and your water sample may need to be refrigerated. If you received ice packs with your sample bottle, make sure to freeze the ice pack for 24 hours and use these when you return the sample to the EGLE Laboratory. Refrigerate your sample for 8 hours if possible if you will not be able to return it to the laboratory within 24 hours of collection. DO NOT freeze the sample. Samples received frozen are not acceptable for testing.

SUBMITTING SAMPLES

7. How do I get my samples to the EGLE Drinking Water Laboratory for testing?

You may send your water sample UPS Next Day Air, USPS Priority Mail Express, or FedEx Priority Overnight to the EGLE Drinking Water Laboratory, Monday through Thursday to be received by Friday. You must include a completed Request for Water Analysis form and check or money order made payable to the State of Michigan.

You may also bring the sample in personally. 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.

REQUEST FORMS

8. How many Request for Analysis forms do I need?

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 Water Analysis form with the corresponding sample bottle (i.e. well number, address, sampling point etc.).

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

YES. You **must** indicate the sample collector, collection date and time (circle am or pm) for your water sample on the Request for Water Analysis form. Testing methods have a U.S. 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, and your sample will be rejected.

10. There is a box on the Request for Water Analysis form that says "DO NOT test my sample(s) unless all requirements of the Safe Drinking Water Act are met..." Should I check this box?

If your sample is collected for compliance with the State of Michigan you should check this box. This ensures that the laboratory will only accept your sample if it meets testing requirements such as holding time or thermal preservation. If you do not check this box, the laboratory will test your sample and your payment will be processed, even if it did not meet acceptance criteria. Results from samples that do not meet testing requirements in this case may be used for informational value only.

11. I need to test my drinking water for E. coli. What test code should I use?

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

SAMPLE HOLD TIME and RESULTS

12. What is a holding time?

Testing methods have a U.S. 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.

13. 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 U.S. EPA hold time for surface water samples?
Surface water samples can be delivered to the Laboratory Monday through 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 six (6) hours of collection to allow the laboratory to begin testing within the specified U.S. EPA hold time criteria (8 hours from time of collection). If you are bringing in a large number of surface water samples to the Laboratory, please call 517-335-9581 to schedule these in advance.
14. If I bring in my sample for drinking water bacteria to the lab in the morning can I get my results the same day?
No. Testing for Bacteria requires a 24 hour incubation time to complete the analysis. Results are released daily by the EGLE Laboratory to get this critical information to our customers as quickly as possible.
15. When can I expect test results for my water sample?
You can expect test results for your water sample in 3-10 days after your sample is received at the Laboratory for most testing. 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.

EGLE LABORATORY LOCATION AND HOURS

16. Where is the EGLE Drinking Water Laboratory located?
The EGLE Drinking Water Laboratory is located at 3350 N Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Lansing, MI 48906.
17. What are the Laboratory's hours?
The EGLE Drinking Water Laboratory is open Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 5:00pm, except holidays. Samples may be dropped off at the laboratory Monday through Thursday, 8:00am to 4:30pm and Friday 8:00am to 3:30pm.

For additional information, contact the EGLE Drinking Water Lab at 517-335-8184.