



**Monterey County Health Department
Consolidated Environmental Laboratory**

1270 Natividad Rd.
Salinas, CA 93906
(831) 755-4516

DOMESTIC PANEL TESTING

PURPOSE: Tests for bacteria and common chemicals found in groundwater wells are performed to help establish whether water is suitable for drinking. Some of these chemicals have health effects (i.e. nitrates & heavy metals) while positive Total Coliforms and E.coli indicate contaminated water and the potential for disease transmission.

SAMPLE COLLECTION: Water samples taken for coliform bacteria and chemical testing must be collected and handled carefully to ensure that the sample taken truly represents the bacteriological quality of water in the system. The following procedures will help you in this regard:

1. Sterile containers provided by your laboratory must be used. Do not touch or otherwise contaminate the inside of the container, the inside of the cap, or the threads of the container. The container contains a chemical to neutralize chlorine; do not rinse the container.
2. **Select a tap as close to the well as possible** or a faucet that is used frequently. Do not take a sample from a faucet that is leaking around the handle. Do not take a sample from a dirty faucet or one that is equipped with an aerator and/or screen. Also, do not take a sample from a swing type faucet. Never take a sample from a hose or other device that is attached to the faucet - - - remove them first.
3. When you have found a suitable faucet, open it and allow water to flow for a few minutes before collecting a sample. Adjust faucet so that it produces a flow without splashing
4. Carefully fill the two containers provided:
 - One sterile container – fill the container up to the 100 mL mark.
 - One-quart plastic container without preservative
5. Label the sample bottles with sample identification, date and time of collection.
6. Refrigerate the sample and/or place the sample in a cooler with enough ice until it can be delivered to the laboratory. It is recommended that samples arrive at the laboratory below 10 °C if received more than 2 hours after collection.
7. Complete the laboratory form including mailing address, name of sample collector, well number, description of sample point, date and time of collection, and test ordered (i.e. "DOMESTIC PANEL").

CARE OF SAMPLE:

*Some analyses included in the Domestic Panel must be tested within 24 hours of collection. To assure that this time limit is met, it is preferable to: 1) collect samples Monday through Thursday, and 2) submit the sample directly to the laboratory between 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. or one of the following health department offices **on the same day of collection:***

Monterey Co. Environmental Health
1200 Aguajito Rd.
Monterey, CA
831-647-7654

Monterey Co. Environmental Health
200 Broadway St. Suite 70
King City, CA
831-386-6899

Monterey - Drop off by 9:00 a.m.

King City – Drop off by 9:00 a.m.

Samples that cannot be delivered to the laboratory within one hour after collection should be refrigerated (e.g. iced cooler). Health department offices can provide for cold storage/transport from point of receipt.

Due to the number of analyses involved, average turnaround is three weeks.

FEE FOR TESTING

Some of the Domestic Panel analyses may be performed by a reference laboratory that we have selected based on high quality and competitive pricing. The current fee for the Domestic Panel analysis is \$132 per sample. If you do not have an account with our laboratory, you must pay in advance for this testing. Clients who have an account will be billed at the end of the month that the results are reported.

INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

Coliforms other than the fecal group are ubiquitous and careful maintenance of the water system and collection of samples is necessary to avoid contamination. State and federal drinking water standards allow **total coliforms** to be present in up to 5% of samples tested by large water systems each month; however, small drinking water systems which test fewer than 20 samples per month should have no **total coliform** positive samples/month. *E. coli* should never be found in drinking water; if *E. coli* is present, it represents an urgent health threat and the water should be considered non-potable until properly treated

The Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for each chemical tested will accompany your laboratory result. This is a number established by Federal and State drinking water standards; levels above the MCL have been associated with adverse health effects or unsatisfactory aesthetic qualities. If you have any questions regarding laboratory results, please call. We appreciate your business and look forward to providing you the highest quality laboratory services.