

Analytical Environmental Laboratory Sample Acceptance Policy

The laboratory does not accept samples composed of or containing material that is known to be explosive, radioactive, extremely toxic or biologically hazardous or otherwise potentially harmful to laboratory personnel. Samples containing hydrofluoric acid at concentrations greater than those used for preserving metals standards are also not accepted.

Each sample set needs to be accompanied by a **chain of custody** (COC) or one will need to be filled out prior to samples being accepted. Information needed is sample identification (if more than one or may be differentiated by date and time collected), location, date of collection, time of collection (must have if hold time is ≤ 72 hrs), sample type, preservative type, collector's name and signature (with date & time), and signature of person relinquishing the sample (if different than collected by, with date & time).

Containers must be labeled with identification such as company name, location sampled / sample ID, and date and time collected. **Labels** need to be water resistant and marked with permanent ink.

Samples need to be received within **holding time** requirements. Hold time is factored to the hour for tests with hold times of 72 hours or less, and until midnight of the last day for tests with hold times greater than 72 hours. The hold time for composite samples starts when the last sample is collected. Samples that need to be analyzed out of hold time will be noted as such.

Samples must be collected in the appropriate laboratory provided **containers** for the types of tests being analyzed. Samples received in the wrong type of container for the tests requested or in non-laboratory client containers will be noted as "received in client container or inappropriate container".

Most containers from AEL will be pre-preserved. If adding your own **preservative**, this must be done within 15 minutes of sample collection. As appropriate, samples will have their pH checked in lab. If the pH is out of the proper range, the sample will either not be analyzed, or any data reported will be noted as "received with incorrect or insufficient preservative". An exception to this is metals analysis, which does not need qualifying unless the time from adding acid (to a pH less than 2) is less than 24 hours before analysis.

In most cases, containers need to be filled to the shoulder, leaving slight space for shaking purposes for liquids. This ensures adequate volume for running tests and proper dilution for preservatives. Insufficient **volume** will be addressed on a case-by-case basis, depending on the test needed, reporting limit required, and ability to obtain additional sample.

Avoid exposing samples to direct sunlight. Samples must be placed in a cooler in wet ice (recommended, or equivalent) immediately after collection (with a few exceptions, such as *liquid* metals analysis). If you have a glass "**Temperature**" VOA vial, add this to the cooler with the first sample. The goal for most analyses is to lower and maintain the temperature of the samples to between just above the freezing point of water to 6°C unless the test specifically notes otherwise. Biological samples should be kept at less than 10°C and must not show signs of freezing. Analysis with other specified temperatures must arrive within the specified range or within 2° of the required temperature. Samples being delivered to the laboratory *on the same day of collection* may fail to meet the temperature requirement and are considered acceptable if there is evidence that the chilling process has begun, such as arrival on ice. Data reported on samples not meeting the above requirements will be noted as "insufficient thermal preservation". Samples transported at ambient temperature will be accepted, but any data reported on these samples will be noted as "received at ambient temperature". Samples received frozen or with ice crystals will be addressed on a case-by-case basis, depending on the ability to obtain additional sample and the specifications for that test.

To reduce chances of contamination, it is recommended to place drinking water **coliform** samples in a separate cooler from wastewater or other possible contaminants or in a sealed ziplock bag.

Custody seals (if used) are verified to be intact on the cooler and/or containers. If any are not intact, those samples need to be recollected or results will be noted as having broken custody seals. Any sample received damaged and/or where it can possibly be contaminated will not be analyzed for regulatory purposes or will be noted appropriately.