

Collection of Drinking Water Samples for Microbiological Testing

The following procedure summarises the process for collecting microbiological samples for compliance with Taumata Arowai Quality Assurance Rules and Water Services (Drinking Water Standards for New Zealand) Regulations 2022.

Step 1. Flush Tap

Turn the tap to full flow and run for at least 2 minutes. If water is visibly turbid, continue until water runs clear. Turn off the tap.

Step 2. Tap Sterilisation (2 options)

- Butane Torch: heat tap for at least 15 seconds, concentrating the flame around the end of the sample tap. The tap will get extremely hot. Turn the tap on to a moderate flow for at least 15 seconds.

Note: Only use this method if the tap is outdoors (in an open location), and metal with no plastic inserts. Where it is unsafe or unsuitable to flame use option b.

- Use disinfectant wipes (such as Medi wipes) or disinfectant spray to sterilise the end of the tap (both outside and inside as far as possible). Do not use chemicals that leave sterilising residue. Allow the tap to dry for 1 minute and then turn the tap on and flush at a moderate flow for at least 1 minute.

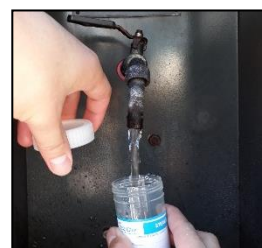


Step 3. Hand Sterilisation

Sterilise hands using a hand steriliser or disinfectant spray. Alternatively, disposable gloves may be used.

Step 4: Sample Collection & Temperature Collection

- If the sample is for compliance purposes, ensure you record the temperature of the water being flushed using a thermometer. Record this result on the submission form provided. Do not immerse the thermometer in your sample container – either use a generic container or test from the flow.
- A sterile container must be used for sample collection. Open the container and hold the lid in an upright position. Do not let the container lid meet any surfaces that may cause contamination. Hold bottle close as possible to the base to avoid contamination at the screw-thread.
- Fill the bottle up to the minimum marked 100 mL fill line (for 250mL and above containers ensure you fill this to the neck of the bottle), leaving a small air space at the top and taking care to avoid overfilling. Immediately screw the lid down firmly.



NOTE: 100 mL of sample is critical to meet Drinking Water Standards requirements.

If at any point you are concerned that you may have contaminated the sample/container with your hands or contact with other surfaces, discard the container and collect a new sample.

Step 5: Sample Dispatch & Transportation

- Label the container with the sample point name, date and time of collection. Write on the sample container label the sample point name, date and time of collection (for registered water suppliers please include your Taumata Arowai unique identifier)
- Complete sample submission form provided. Sample date and time must also be noted on this form and all other fields completed.
- Pack sample containers into the chilly bin upright with frozen icepacks.

Important: Samples must be received at the laboratory within 24 hours of sample collection. Samples must arrive at a temperature less than the temperature taken at the time of sampling (Step 4a). Samples which do not meet these criteria will have a comment noted on their report that they are non-compliant with New Zealand Drinking Water Standards 2022. If your sample is not for compliance purposes, the sample can be accepted for analysis so long as the temperature on receipt at the laboratory is <10 °C but not frozen.