

How to Collect Your First-Draw Lead Water Samples



All public and private schools in Maine are required by State law to test their water for lead. As part of this process, samples need to be taken from drinking water fixtures throughout the school building(s) and sent to a lab for analysis. School staff must identify the fixtures in their buildings that are used for drinking or cooking, order sample kits, collect the water samples and submit them to a lab, and then share the test results with students, parents, and staff.

With proper training, anyone can collect water samples. However, when testing for lead, those water samples need to be collected in a specific way. Follow this guide to ensure your samples are taken correctly, moving you closer to completing your school's testing requirements.

Step 1

Organize Your Sample Kits and Chain-of-Custody

Your school is responsible for ordering enough bottles to sample at every fixture that has been identified as being used for drinking or cooking. Upon receiving your order, A&L Lab will send you 250mL sample bottles and a Chain-of-Custody (COC).

Keep the COC with you as you collect your samples; you will be recording information for each fixture from which a sample is taken.



Each sample bottle will be labeled with a unique identifier specific to a sampling fixture/location in your school. These identifiers are pre-determined by the lab, using information provided in your fixture inventory.



IMPORTANT:
Be sure to use the correct bottle
at each sampling location.

Step 2

Prepare Your Water Fixtures

Before you sample, **make sure each fixture is out of service for a minimum of 8 hours** so water may remain unused in the pipes. We recommend

- sending out a reminder to all staff;
- sampling on a day when the building is (mostly) empty; and/or
- covering fixtures with a plastic bag, secured with tape, and posting a "Do Not Use" sign at each location.



Do not remove aerators or attachments. Samples must be collected as the water would normally be used.

If your school has a large number of fixtures to sample, it may be necessary to collect them over several days to ensure that the water remains unused in each fixture for the 8-hour minimum. However, **once collected, samples must be returned to the lab within 14 days** so that a preservative can be added.

Before you take your first sample...

Check your bottle and COC to confirm you are using the correct bottle with its corresponding sampling location.

Remember:

- Do NOT run the water prior to sampling.
- Do NOT remove aerators or attachments prior to sampling.



Step 3

Collect Your Water Samples

1. Remove the cap on the bottle.

2. Hold the bottle in position under the fixture so water will flow directly in and turn on the tap.



3. Fill the bottle all the way to the neck, leaving a little bit of room so that the lab can add preservative.



4. Secure the cap.

When sampling at ice machines, fill the bottle provided by the laboratory with as much ice as will fit in the bottle. Do not touch the ice with your hands. Use a non-metal scoop or disposable plastic gloves to place the ice in the container.

Step 3 - Collect Your Water Samples (continued)

On the COC, locate the correct sampling location & bottle ID.

- Note the date and time that the water was last used. (This can be filled-in before sampling takes place.)
- Note the date and time the sample was collected.

Step 4

Submit Your Water Samples to the Lab

Once collected, samples must be delivered to the lab within 14 days. If samples are not delivered to the lab within the 14-day timeframe, the process must start again, with all samples collected a second time.

Samples may be delivered using one of fifteen free drop-off locations, or by using the pre-paid postage stamp. A list of drop-off locations should be included in the box with your sample bottles.

After analysis, A&L Lab will provide your school with sample results and additional instructions.

For more information...

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Video trainings are also available
and can be viewed online at
<https://leadtestingmaineschools.com/>

