

Homeowner Tap Sample Collection Procedures for Voluntary Lead Testing

Testing the water in your home for lead requires these instructions to be followed so the laboratory results you receive will be accurate. The first step is to contact your local testing laboratory and inform them that you want to test for lead in your drinking water. They will provide instructions for picking up a sample bottle and paperwork and for delivering your sample to the laboratory for testing.

Although the laboratory may also provide sampling directions, these instructions should be used during collection of the sample. The sample must be collected from either a regularly used kitchen or bathroom cold water tap and the water in your home must not have been used (no toilet flushing, showering, lawn watering, dish washing, etc.) for at least 6 hours prior to collecting the sample. The sample must be “first draw”, meaning that no water has been used for at least 6 hours before collecting the sample. It’s best to collect the sample early in the morning, or if no one is home during the day, when you arrive home from work. The collection procedure is described in more detail below.

Tap Sample Collection Procedures:

1. Contact your local testing laboratory and inform them that you want to do testing for lead in the drinking water at your home. They will provide instructions for picking up the sample bottle and sample custody form and delivering your sample to the laboratory for testing. Your laboratory should be providing a 1-liter bottle for sample collection. If they provide a 250-mL bottle, ask them for a 1-liter bottle.
2. Samples are to be taken from the most used drinking water faucets in your home. A kitchen or bathroom cold water faucet is usually the most used faucet for drinking and cooking. Do not sample from locations that are not regularly used for drinking and cooking. If the selected faucet has a point-of-use treatment device, (e.g. water softener, carbon filter system or reverse osmosis filter system), sample the location as you would typically draw water for drinking or cooking.
3. Each sample must be collected after the water has stood undisturbed in the pipes for a minimum of 6 hours, but not more than 12 hours. Due to this requirement, it is best to collect the sample first thing in the morning. If you are certain that no one is home during the day, the sample can be collected when you arrive home from work or school.
4. Each sample must be one liter in volume and must contain the first water drawn from the faucet.
5. Remove the cap from the one-liter sample bottle, place the container directly below the faucet and gently open the cold-water tap. Fill the sample bottle to the line marked “1 liter” or “1000-ml” and turn off the water.

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6. Tightly cap the sample bottle and complete the required information on the sample bottle label and custody form. If the label and/or custody form has been partially completed for you, verify that the information is correct.
7. If any plumbing repairs or replacement has recently been done in your home, note this information on the custody form.
8. Place the sample bottle and custody form in a box or container for delivery to the laboratory. Be sure to retain your copy of the custody form.