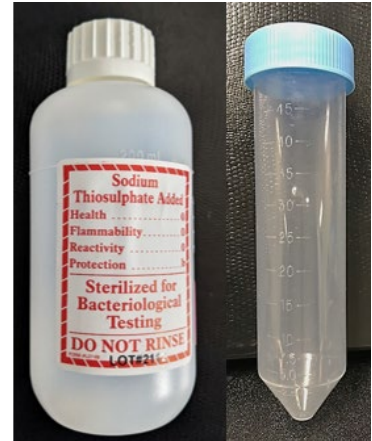


# How to Collect a Composite *Enterococcus* Beach Water Sample

Only designated priority beaches may submit *Enterococcus* samples. Samples submitted by non-designated beaches will be rejected. Refer to the [Alberta Safe Beach Protocol](#) for more information. Contact your local public health inspector if you have questions or concerns about recreational water quality.

Materials supplied by AHS (per sampling event)
Three 50 mL conical tubes
One Prov Lab microbiological bottle
One Prov Lab Microbiological Water Analysis Requisition form
One plastic resealable sample bag
Two bright pink labels
Materials supplied by sampler
Shoulder length gloves (vet use)
Preprinted beach name/access number labels (optional)
Hip waders
Ice packs
Cooler
Life jacket/personal flotation device



Prov Lab microbiological bottle (left) and 50 mL conical tube (right).

**Note:** If a cyanobacterial (blue-green algal) bloom is present, avoid direct contact with the water as some types of cyanobacteria may cause skin irritation. The use of hip waders and shoulder length plastic gloves (available from veterinary supply stores) will help prevent contact with a bloom. A cyanobacteria reference guide, which includes pictures, can be found in the Frequently Asked Questions document located at [www.ahs.ca/bga](http://www.ahs.ca/bga).

## Collecting the Sample

1. Choose three sampling locations along the length of the beach used most often by bathers, where the water is about 1 meter or 3 feet deep (approximately hip deep, see picture below). If there are waves or swells, consider sampling in shallower water.



## How to Collect a Composite *Enterococcus* Beach Water Sample | 2

2. If the water is calm, wait for sediment and debris to settle before collecting the water sample. Collect the sample from an incoming wave if present.

**Note: If a cyanobacterial (blue-green algal) bloom is present, try to minimize the amount of algae in the sample.**

3. With clean hands or gloves, hold the 50 mL conical tube near its base with one hand and remove the cap with the other hand.
4. Tip the tube upside down, then dip it 15–30 cm (6–12 in) below the water surface and collect a full tube of water.
5. Pour out enough water to reach the 50 mL mark on the tube. Replace the cap on the tube.
6. Repeat for the other two sampling sites.
7. Pour the water from all three 50 mL tubes into **one** Prov Lab microbiological bottle. The total volume of the composite water sample in the bottle is approximately 150 mL (below the 200 mL mark on the bottle). Replace the cap immediately so it is secure but not overtightened to prevent the lid from cracking.

**Note: Do not touch the inside of the caps or the rim of the conical tubes and microbiological sample bottle.**

### Submitting the Sample

1. Stick the ID label from the requisition form AND a bright pink sticker on to the bottle as shown in the picture (right).
2. Complete the requisition form. See the last page of this resource for a sample form.
  - a. Write “BEACH COMPOSITE SAMPLE” in the collection site field.
  - b. Put a bright pink sticker on the requisition form.
3. Place the bottle into the plastic bag and place the requisition form in the side pouch.
4. Place the bottle in an upright position in a cooler with ice packs.
5. Immediately transport the sample to an Environmental Public Health office, Prov Lab (also referred to as Alberta Precision Laboratories) Calgary, or Prov Lab Edmonton.




### Notes

- Samples will be rejected if:
  - The ID sticker from the requisition form is not attached to the bottle.
  - They arrive at the lab more than 24 hours after collection.
  - They are delivered to the Edmonton or Calgary labs outside the accepted days and times indicated below.
  - They are from a non-priority beach without prior approval from a public health inspector.
- Labels can be made to assist with filling out the requisition form (see sample label below). Labels should include the water body name, beach name, and beach access number.


Stormy Lake  
Campground Beach  
Access number: 9621522

- Discard the 50 mL conical tubes after each sampling event. These cannot be used to collect future samples.
- Find out where and when you can drop off water samples by visiting the [Water Sample Bottle Pick-up & Drop of Locations](#) service listing.
- If delivering samples directly to Prov Lab, samples will only be accepted:
  - Prov Lab Calgary: Monday to Wednesday before 4:00 pm
  - Prov Lab Edmonton: Monday to Wednesday before 4:00 pm and Thursday before 12:00 pm (noon)

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**Alberta Health Services**



Lab Use Only

### Microbiological Water Analysis Requisition



1578061

Peel and stick this ID label onto sample bottle  
Sample will be rejected if ID label is NOT affixed to sample bottle

**NOTE: Sample will be rejected if date and time of collection are not filled in**

Date of Collection			Time of Collection		
YYYY	MMM	DD	HR	MIN	(Check one) <input type="checkbox"/> AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM
2025	Jun	01	10	30	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AM

**Water Sample Type** (check ONE box only)  
Sample will be rejected if more than one checkbox is marked

**Drinking Water**

☐ Treated Public/Communal - Source \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Untreated Public/Communal - Source \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Private Household Well \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Private Household Other \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Ice (unmelted) \_\_\_\_\_

**Resample - Drinking Water** (previous sample showed presence of coliforms)

☐ Treated Public/Communal - Source \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Untreated Public/Communal - Source \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Private Household Well \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Private Household Other \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Ice (unmelted) \_\_\_\_\_

**Non Drinking Water**

☐ Pool greater than 30°C (86°F)

☐ Pool less than or equal to 30°C (86°F)

☐ Clinical Distilled/Deionized

☐ Clinical Laboratory Reagent Water

☐ Back Reverse Osmosis

☒ Beach

**Non Drinking Raw Water**

☐ Ground Water

☐ Surface Water Lake

☐ Surface Water River

☐ Surface Water Other \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Sewage

Remarks/Requests

**Sample Details**

Water Supply for (Name)  
**Stormy Lake Campground Beach**

ACCESS # (lab assigned) or Feature Code # (First Nations)  
**9621522**

AESRD Approval # (Alberta Environment Samples)

Mailing Address  
**1234 5 Street**

City  
**Anywhere**

Province  
**AB**

Postal Code  
**T5J 2M6**

Phone (10 digits)  
**780-645-3396**

Collected by (print name clearly)  
**Joan Smith**

Collector's Phone # (10 digits)  
**780-791-6078**

Collection Site (e.g. kitchen tap or whirlpool #3)  
**BEACH COMPOSITE SAMPLE**

**Legal Land Description** (private homeowners only)

Qtr	Section	Township	Range	W of _____ M
<input type="checkbox"/> NE	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>			
<input type="checkbox"/> NW				
<input type="checkbox"/> SE				
<input type="checkbox"/> SW				
Lot	Block	Plan		

GPS Co-ordinates (private homeowners only)  
(up to 6 decimal places; see reverse for example)

Latitude \_\_\_\_\_ Longitude \_\_\_\_\_

**Health Agency Name and Address**

**Anywhere Community Health Services**  
**4444 5 Street**  
**Anywhere, AB T5J 2M6**

Collection date and time must be completed.  
Samples will be rejected if left blank or received at the lab more than 24 hours after

Remove this label and place on sample bottle.

Fill in the water body name, beach name, and beach access number. Pre-printed labels with this information can be used.

Write BEACH COMPOSITE SAMPLE in the collection site field.

Select Beach as the water sample type.

Identify the health unit submitting the sample (usually stamped by health unit office staff).

Place bright pink label here.

190162 (Rev/2018-04)

See reverse for sample collection instructions

Side A

Contact us at 1-833-476-4743 or [submit a request online](https://ahs.ca/eph) at [ahs.ca/eph](https://ahs.ca/eph).

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