How to Collect a Grab *Enterococcus* Water Sample

Only designated priority beaches may submit *Enterococcus* samples. Samples submitted by non-designated beaches will be rejected. Contact your local Public Health Inspector if you have questions or concerns about priority beaches or recreational water quality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Materials supplied by AHS (per sampling event)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three ProvLab microbiological bottles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three ProvLab microbiological water analysis requisition forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three plastic resealable sample bags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six bright pink labels</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Materials supplied by sampler (per sampling event)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shoulder Length gloves (vet use)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preprinted beach name/access number labels (optional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hip waders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice packs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life jacket/Personal floatation device</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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

**Sample Collection**

1. Mark three ProvLab microbiological sample bottles with the numbers “1”, “2” and “3”. It is best to do this while the bottle is still dry, using a permanent marker.
2. Choose 3 sampling locations along the beach in areas of greatest use by swimmers, where the water is about 1 meter or 3 feet deep (approximately hip deep – see picture 2). If there are waves or swells consider sampling in shallower water.

**Note:** It is important to be consistent with how the collection site numbers are assigned between sampling days. If not consistent, sample result data for a specific site cannot be compared. It is recommended that the collection site numbers follow the convention depicted in Picture 2 – from left to right when looking towards the water.

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For more information, visit Environmental Public Health

[ahs.ca/eph](http://ahs.ca/eph)
3. If the water is calm, wait for sediment/debris to settle before collecting the water sample. Collect the sample from an incoming wave if present.  
   **Note:** If Cyanobacteria (Blue-Green Algae) bloom is present, it is important to minimize the amount of algae in the sample.
4. With clean hands or while wearing gloves, hold the bottle near its base with one hand and remove the cap with the other. Do not touch the inside of the cap or the rim of the bottle.
5. Rotate the bottle so the mouth is pointing downward at about a 45-degree angle, then submerge the bottle to elbow depth (approximately 30 cm or 1 foot). Rotate the bottle so the mouth points up and fills with water.
6. Lift the bottle out of the water, and if necessary, pour out enough water to reach the fill line indicated on the bottle. Replace the cap immediately so it is secure but not overtightened to prevent cracked lids.
7. Repeat for the other two sample bottles.

**Submitting the Samples**
1. Stick the ID label from the requisition form onto the bottle (see picture 3).
2. Complete the requisition form (see example below). Please note there is one Access Number assigned per beach (use the same Access number for all three samples). Under collection site on the requisition, write number (“1”, “2” or “3” as it corresponds to the number written on the bottle) and “GRAB SAMPLE”.
3. Affix a bright pink sticker on the requisition and bottle (see pictures 3 and 4).
4. Place the bottle into the plastic bag and place the corresponding requisition in the side pouch.
5. Place the bottles in an upright position in a cooler with ice packs.
6. Immediately transport the samples to an Environmental Public Health office, ProvLab Calgary, or ProvLab Edmonton.
Notes:

- Each of the three samples needs its own requisition and sample bag.
- Samples will be rejected if:
  - the ID sticker from the requisition form is not attached to the bottle;
  - a sample is received at the lab more than 24 hours after collection;
  - a sample is received at ProvLab Edmonton or Calgary outside the accepted days and times indicated below; and
  - a sample is submitted 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. Include the water body name, the beach name and the beach access number. They also may include the collectors name and phone number.
- Water sample bottle drop off locations for each Zone can be found on the Sample Your Water webpage.
- Contact your local Environmental Public Health office to determine water sample submission days and times. If delivering samples directly to the ProvLab, samples will only be accepted:
  - ProvLab Calgary: Monday to Wednesday before 4:00 pm
  - ProvLab Edmonton: Monday to Thursday before 12:00 pm (noon)
How to Collect a GRAB Enterococcus Water Sample

1. Identify collection site (1, 2 or 3) and “GRAB SAMPLE”.

2. Indicate the Water Sample Type: BEACH.

3. Place fluorescent pink label here.

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

5. Remove this label and place on sample bottle.

6. Affix the pre-printed label here (or write by hand) that indicates: The water body name, the beach name, the Beach Access Number and the collector’s name and phone number.

For more information, please contact your nearest Environmental Public Health office.

Edmonton Main Office 780-735-1800  Grande Prairie Main Office 780-513-7517
Calgary Main Office 403-943-2288  Red Deer Main Office 403-356-6366
Lethbridge Main Office 403-388-6689  www.ahs.ca/eph

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