

Minnesota Department of Health Environmental Laboratory

Sample Acceptance Policy

The Environmental Laboratory (ENV) defines the minimum level of acceptability by the requirements in federal and state laws and regulations, and agreements established with clients and/or projects. ENV used the requirements from these sources to create this Sample Acceptance Policy.

The acceptance criteria for valid submissions are listed below. If a submission is missing required information or contains discrepant information, ENV will note that the submission does not conform to this sample acceptance policy and, if appropriate, holds the sample(s) in a secure area of the lab under proper environmental conditions. ENV staff will contact the responsible party and attempt to resolve the issues, if possible, otherwise the laboratory must reject the sample(s). ENV may be able to test the sample(s) after obtaining more information from the submitter, however not all issues will be able to be resolved, as identified below. Samples authorized for analysis while not meeting these requirements will result in data qualifiers as indicated.

The following items are required for a valid sample submission. Samples authorized for analysis while failing to include this information with a submission will result with data qualified as not meeting this sample acceptance policy.

- A properly completed chain of custody form (COC) must be submitted with the associated sample containers.
 - At a minimum, a properly completed COC must include the following information:
 - Sample ID and/or location
 - Date and time of collection (a.m./p.m. clearly identified or 24-hour clock is assumed)
 - Collector's name
 - Preservation type
 - Sample type (i.e. routine/base, quality control, recollect, investigative, etc.)
 - Sample matrix
 - Sample analysis requested
 - Sample comments, if applicable
- Samples must be relinquished to ENV through a signature manifest on COC.

The following items are required to analyze samples and supply valid results. Collector/project manager will be notified of failure(s), and if sample(s) are authorized for analysis while failing to adhere to these requirements, it will result in data qualified indicating results cannot be used for compliance purposes.

- Sample containers must be appropriate for the requested analyses, and undamaged or uncompromised.
- Sample containers must be received within the method-specified holding time.
- Sample containers must be properly chemically and thermally preserved, per method-specified requirements.
- Sample vials for volatile organic compounds must be submitted without headspace (air bubbles cannot exceed 6mm in diameter), per method-specified requirements.
- Sample collection must occur before the expiration date listed on container.
- Sample containers submitted for civil or criminal chain-of-custody must be received with no evidence of tampering (e.g. broken custody seals).

The following items are required to analyze samples and supply valid results. Failure to adhere to these requirements will result in samples being rejected and a resample requested. If resampling is not feasible and analysis proceeds, it will result in data qualified indicating results cannot be used for compliance purposes.

- Sample container(s) must be labeled with unique identifying information that clearly links the container(s) to one, and only one, sample point on the COC.
- Sample containers must be properly filled and sufficient sample volume received to perform analyses requested.

The following items will be recorded and retained by ENV, but will not result in client communication or data qualifiers.

- No collection year on COC – ENV will assume the sample was collected within the past 12 months.
- Fields on a COC that are not identified as a requirement for a valid submission which are left blank at the time of submission will be left blank in the ENV laboratory information management system.
- Container labels should be water-resistant. Both labels and COC should be completed using indelible ink.
- Incorrect edits on the COC and/or sample labels. Edits must be done using a single strike-through, initialed and dated.

If you have questions or comments about this policy or about samples you have submitted to ENV, please contact the Operations Unit at 651-201-5300, or by email at health.PHL-Environmental-Lab@state.mn.us.