

## Bacteriological Water Potability Tests

**Cost:** \$20

**To submit:** Samples are accepted 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday-Thursday.

Due to test time requirements samples will not be accepted on Fridays or on a weekday before a holiday.

For your convenience, a calendar for 2011 is available on our website.

**For results:** Results for samples submitted are available after noon the next day.

If this water test is related to a real estate loan, please check with your financial institution for what they require. Please print and press hard when filling out this lab request form. Read all directions before taking sample.

### **To take a sample:**

1. **You must obtain** a bottle from the lab at El Paso County Public Health.
2. **Do not rinse bottle**; the substance in the bottle preserves water in a state suitable for this test. Use only the bottle issued by this laboratory for sampling.
3. **Obtain sample from a stationary faucet** (often in a bathtub) without an aerator or screen. Do not use a swivel faucet. Use a small brush and bleach to clean the opening where water leaves the faucet.
4. **Run cold water at least five minutes before taking a sample.**
5. **Fill the bottle to line** and replace lid at once. Do not touch the inside of the lid or bottle.
6. **Sample must be received by our lab within 24 hours of sampling.** Refrigerate sealed bottle until delivery to the lab.

### **To obtain results:**

Results are available after noon on the day after receipt in the lab. All results will be mailed, and you may call for results. If you have any questions, or for results, please call **(719) 578-3199**.

### **Standards:**

No specific regulations or laws exist that govern private well water quality. It is the policy of El Paso County Public Health to evaluate private water well supplies by the same standards used by the state to evaluate public drinking water. Those standards indicate that the presence of coliform (potentially harmful bacteria) will cause a water sample to fail. Often the conditions that cause a sample to fail can be corrected through chlorination.

### **Reasons for Rejection of Samples**

- Time between sample collection and receipt by laboratory exceeded
- Presence of disinfectant in sample noticed, e.g., odor
- Evidence of freezing
- Use of a container not approved by the Laboratory for the purpose intended
- Insufficient sample volume, e.g., <100 mL
- Presence of interfering contaminants noticed, e.g., hydrocarbons, cleaners, heavy metals, etc.
- Sample temperature exceeding the maximum allowable

**To Chlorinate Water Supply Wells**

- I. Inspect the water supply system for all possible routes of contamination (broken well casing, condition of the sanitary seal, leaks, structural integrity of cistern, surface source, etc.)
- II. After contamination routes have been repaired, the supply can be disinfected as follows:
  - A. Mix 1 gallon household bleach (use non-scented only) to 4 gallons of water. Pour this mixture into the well; avoid exposed electrical connections in the well.
  - B. Open outdoor water taps until a chlorine odor is noticeable, then turn them off. (It may take 20-30 minutes to draw chlorine through). Now, turn on indoor faucets until chlorine odor is noticeable. (In some cases you may not be able to smell chlorine). Shut off all taps.
  - C. Use a hose that is connected as near to the well as possible and run water back down the well for at least 15-20 minutes to recirculate the chlorinated water. Thoroughly rinse the sides of the well casing and the pitless adaptor during recirculation. Wash every component of the system that may have contact with the water supply.
  - D. Allow chlorine to remain in the well, storage tank, and all pipes **overnight**.
  - E. The next morning, flush chlorine from your system as follows:
    - ✓ Turn on an outdoor water faucet to flush the lines. ***Do not*** turn on indoor water because it will drain chlorinated water through the septic system or over the septic area.
    - ✓ Flushing may take several hours. ***Do not*** run water faster than the well’s capacity (gallons per minutes.)
  - F. Pump the well until the odor and taste of chlorine has disappeared. To test the water for chlorine, use one DPD Tablet #1 in approximately 1 tablespoon of water. If the water turns pink, chlorine is present -- the deeper the pink, the higher the chlorine level remaining. Continue to flush water out and retest with DPD Tablets. Use an outdoor faucet with the hose removed for the test.
  - G. When outdoor water is free of chlorine, you may flush indoor lines. Water may be resampled for bacteria when chlorine is no longer detectable in the system. Excessive contamination in your well may require repeating the disinfecting process.

**Definitions:**

<b>Community Supply:</b>	Serves 25 or more people who reside year round at the location. Example: The city of Colorado Springs or the town of Manitou Springs.
<b>Non-community Supply:</b>	Not a community system but serves water to 25 or more people for at least 60 days per year. Example: A school or restaurant.
<b>Private Supply:</b>	An individually owned system serving a single residence.
<b>Absence:</b>	Absence of coliform bacteria and compliance with drinking water standards.
<b>Presence:</b>	Presence of coliform bacteria and non-compliance with drinking water standards. The water supply should be treated and retested.
<b>E. coli-Absence:</b>	Presence of coliform bacteria but absence of <i>Escherichia coli</i> bacteria. With coliform present, the water supply still is in non-compliance and needs to be treated and retested.
<b>E. coli- Presence:</b>	Presence of <i>Escherichia coli</i> bacteria and non-compliance with drinking water standards. The water supply should be treated and retested.

The El Paso County Public Health Laboratory is certified to test for bacterial contamination, for information and guidance on additional testing refer to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment’s website [www.cdphe.state.co.us/lr/index.htm](http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/lr/index.htm)