



Tips & Reminders for Collecting Environmental Bacterial Water Samples

Introduction

The following tips and reminders apply primarily to the recreational bacterial water quality monitoring program which is administered by the Department of Health (DoH).

Sampling Season & Best Sample Days

For the Perth metropolitan, South West region and south of 26°latitude the period from November to May is the peak season for monitoring recreational waters.

For locations north of the 26°latitude, it may be more appropriate to undertake recreational bacterial water monitoring between May and November to reflect peak tourist season activities.

When determining specific days to collect water samples, it is best to try to align the majority of sampling days when the weather is hotter or there is a greater likelihood for people to be swimming e.g. hot temperature days in December, January and February and during school holidays.

Targeting peak recreational days is particularly important, especially when the DoH has determined that a minimum of 5 samples is required for that site for the season.

Preparing for & Undertaking Water Sampling

1. As a courtesy, contact PathWest Waters (PWW) either the day before sampling or on the morning prior to sampling to advise how many samples will be submitted for analysis.
Phone (9346-2583) or, email waters.pathwest@health.wa.gov.au
2. Use 250ml sterilised bottles supplied free of charge by PWW. Sample bottles can be collected directly from PWW or contact PWW to make alternate arrangements.
3. Sample forms are also available from PWW. When filling out the Waters Request form remember to detail as follows:

Company Name: Environmental Health
Address: EHSOCEANS or EHSRIVERS depending on sample type
Senders Comments: "Oceans" or "Rivers" Monitoring Program
Tick – natural waters
Site Code: EV3/*insert corresponding reference number
Description: *insert corresponding site description title*



4. To make filling out the sampling form easier on the day of sampling, it is worthwhile partially completing a waters request form (leave officers name and date blank) and photocopy for the intended number of sampling weeks. All that will then be required is to complete the date & officer's name on the sample form on the day of sampling.
5. The field observation sheet needs to be completed on each sampling date to look at factors that may cause elevated results such as the number of bathers, birds in the water, rainfall, presence of seaweed etc.
6. A copy of the field observation sheet also needs to be sent to DoH at the end of the recreational season. It is especially helpful if field observations can be compiled into an excel spreadsheet. Recording and providing field observation notes can help to figure out reasons for bacterial levels and risk factors at the sampling site.
7. Take one water sample per site location using aseptic technique.
8. Collect samples from knee-waist depth water approximately 30cm below the surface.
9. Collecting samples will require you to wade into the water; otherwise a sampling pole can be used. A pool/paint extension pole can be made into a suitable sampling pole, by fixing an appropriate sized clamp to the end to hold the sample bottle.
10. Store water sample below 4 degrees and take to PWW Examination Laboratory preferably before **12pm** (2pm absolute latest).

More Information:

Water Unit
Environmental Health Directorate
Department of Health
PO Box 8172
PERTH BUSINESS CENTRE WA 6849

Telephone: 08 9388 4999
Facsimile: 08 9388 4910

Printed on: 25 October 2010

\\Wsep218fs6\hpg_sect\$\EHD\Water Unit\ENVIRONMENTAL\Publications\Section\Fact Sheet\tips reminders bacterial sampling\Tips Reminders for Collecting Environmental Bacterial Water Samples.doc

Produced by Environmental Health Directorate
© Department of Health, Western Australia 2010