



## STATE SMALL WATER SYSTEMS FAQ'S

**1. Q: What is the proper procedure for collecting a water sample for the bacteriological examination?**

- A: First obtain a sterile water collection bottle from the laboratory.
- ü Select a suitable sample tap that does not have the potential of contaminating the water. **DO NOT USE** any faucets with aerators or attached hoses, faucets surrounded by vegetation, or faucets with excessive splattering.
  - ü Allow the water to run from the faucet for 1-2 minutes.
  - ü Fill the sterile sample bottle to the appropriate level.
  - ü Label the sample bottle with the date, time collected, sample site and collectors initials.
  - ü Deliver the sample to the laboratory within 24 hours. Keep the sample in a refrigerator or in a cooler until delivered to the laboratory. *The sample must be tested within 24 hours of collection.*

**2. Q: What if the laboratory calls and says that our routine quarterly water sample is coliform positive, what should I do?**

- A: If any routine sample is total coliform-positive, the water supplier must collect a repeat sample from the same location within 48 hours of being notified of the positive result. If the repeat sample is also total coliform-positive, the sample must be analyzed for the presence of fecal coliforms or *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*). *It is important to alert all users on the water system of a positive repeat sample by phone or written notification.* The water supplier must also notify the Department of Environmental Health (DEH) representative within 48 hours from the time the results are received and must take corrective actions as directed by the DEH representative to eliminate the cause of the contamination.

**3. Q: If my water sample for a bacteriological test comes back positive from the laboratory, how do I disinfect the water system?**

- A: First double check the sampling procedures used to collect the sample. If you sampled the system incorrectly then retest by obtaining another sample. See our Disinfection of Contaminated Drinking Water System information and our Chlorine Suppliers List for more details on our website at [www.ehinfo.org](http://www.ehinfo.org). Lastly, check out our Troubleshooting a Contaminated Water System guide on the website.

**4. Q: If my bacteriological water sample test came back positive can I disinfect the water system with household liquid bleach?**

A: No. State regulations require public water systems to use only a liquid chlorine source without additives. In addition, State Small Water Systems are required to notify all residents served by the water system verbally or in writing. See our public Warning Notification poster on the website.

**5. Q: If we need to drill an additional well what procedures do we follow?**

A: All new wells drilled for a State Small Water System must complete the following requirements: (1) submit a well driller's log and (2) submit a detailed chemical laboratory test of the water. See the State Small Water Quality Tests form on our website.

**6. Q: No one is committed to overseeing the responsibilities of managing our water company. Do you have any suggestions?**

A: Yes, see our Water Treatment Operators List on our website. A certified water treatment operator can handle the billing; quarterly bacteriological sampling, maintenance and repair work, disinfection, and deal with the annual inspections made by the Department.