

Vermont Agriculture and Environmental Laboratory

163 Admin Drive

Randolph Center, VT 05061

7:45 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday - Friday

For after-hours sample drop-off coordination, please contact the lab

at AGR.VAEL@vermont.gov



Sample Containers:

Sample containers play an extremely important role in sample quality. Certain parameters require certain bottles. Some containers can be re-used, and some must be disposed of after analysis. In the field, it is important to use the correct containers for the correct parameters, and to correctly label all containers to prohibit confusion when the samples are brought to the laboratory.

Sample containers can be obtained from Sample Receiving by placing a Bottle Order through the AGR.VAEL email or in person. Blank Bottle Order forms can be found on the laboratory website.

General Sampling Instructions:

All sampling should begin with recording the appropriate information either on your pre-log sheet(s) or by your own method (i.e., a field notebook) to be logged upon lab arrival. The information required by the lab includes:

- Sample site ID
- Date of sampling
- Time of sampling
- Sampler name

This information is **100% required** by the laboratory, samples that are missing ANY of this information may be rejected by the laboratory.

If for any reason a sample cannot be collected, please note clearly on the field sheet that this is the case and if the site may be deleted from the order. This ensures that your results can be processed without delay.

All writing should be done in blue or black pen – NO PENCIL.

After samples are collected and capped, they should be placed into a cooler with bagged ice/water frozen into bottles. Using free ice in a cooler should be avoided. Sample containers and tubes are not guaranteed to be leak-free, therefore, samples that are floating around in cooler of melted ice are at risk of unnecessary contamination.

ALL LABELS NOT USED SHOULD BE IMMEDIATELY DISCARDED TO PREVENT ACCIDENTAL RE-USE IN FUTURE SAMPLINGS.

All labels are unique to every bottle order, they should never be exchanged or re-used from one site to the next. If you need to add/change a site but do not have a specified label, use masking tape (or write on the bottle) to note the site it is from. New labels can be added when samples are dropped off at lab. Do not use labels from another site, even if that site's labels were not used.

Returning Samples to the Laboratory:

After all sample sites have been collected, along with the required quality control samples, samplers should bring their coolers back to the VAEL Laboratory as soon as possible.

Samples should be delivered to:

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**** E. coli samples can only be accepted Monday through Thursday before 3pm ****

****E. coli samples cannot be accepted the day before a state holiday****

State holidays can be found on the State of Vermont website.

Hold Times:

All sample parameters have a “hold time” – a maximum time allowed before parameters are required to be run, without compromising the quality of the data.

All hold times are determined using the date and time of SAMPLING, not the date and time of receipt at the laboratory.

It is very important that regardless of hold times, all samples are returned as quickly as possible to the laboratory. If samples are “held” and not brought to the laboratory quickly, it only increases the chances of samples being run outside of their hold time.

Preservation:

Some sample parameters also require preservation to ensure the quality of their data is not compromised. This can include needing to be kept within a certain temperature range, being filtered, and/or being acidified within 24hrs of collection.

Hold time and preservation requirements can be found on your pre-log sheet, on our website under “Lab Tests and Fees”, or a copy may be provided upon request.

Drop Off and Sample Delivery Procedures:

When delivering samples to VAEL (in person or via courier), please follow these procedures.

- Confirm that each sample bottle is clearly labeled with the following information (WinLIMS labels have this information):
 - 5-digit project number (i.e., 001-05)
 - Customer's Sample ID (i.e., sample location)
 - Name of the test required (i.e., Total Phosphorus, Earth Metals). A list of VAEL tests can be found on the VAEL website.
 - WinLIMS Sample Number (if applicable)
- Confirm that the Field sheets are complete, including the following information:
 - Name and contact information for person who collected the samples.
 - 5-digit program number (i.e., 001-05).
 - Date and time of collection for each sample.
 - Unique Sample ID for each sample (i.e., Customer Sample ID).
 - Test(s) required for each sample (i.e., Total Phosphorus, Earth Metals).
 - Indication as to whether samples requiring chemical preservation have been acidified.
 - Indication as to whether samples requiring filtering have been filtered.
 - Indication of any deviations from the Field Sheet (i.e., sites not visited, samples not collected, extra samples collected).

The receipt of your samples may be delayed, or your samples may be qualified if any of this information is missing. To minimize this delay, please leave good contact information so that we may reach you with any questions. You will get an email confirmation when samples are accepted.