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Microbiological Sampling Protocol for Bathing Beaches

1. Choose a fixed sampling location and use this location and use this location consistently throughout your program.

2. The sampling location must be located in the bathing/swimming area.

3. Establish the correct number of locations as determined by a Public Health Official.

4. Follow procedures to collect samples where the water is 1 to 1.5 meters deep (3 to 4 feet). This can be done by hand or with a sampling rod.

Sample Collection Procedure:

5. When positioned at the sampling site, uncap a new sterile sampling container- be careful not to touch the inside of the cap.

6. Holding the bottle near its base, turn the bottle over and plunge it neck down into the water to the depth of 15 to 30 cm (6 to 12 inches-up to about your elbow). It is not a concern if the preservative (sodium thiosulfate) powder or pellets falls out.

7. The bottle should then be turned until the neck points slightly upwards, the mouth being directed toward the current. If no current exists, push the bottle horizontally forward in a direction away from the hand. Samples must not be contaminated by allowing the water to pass over the hand and then into the bottle.

NOTE: When the depth of water is less than 1 meter, samples should be obtained as far off shore as possible but within swimming area.

8. Immediately recap bottle.

9. Complete the laboratory submission form. Note the weather on your form, particularly any recent rainfall event, wind & wave action.

10. Refrigerate the sample or keep cold at less than 10°C. **Do Not Freeze.** Ice packs must be used during warmer seasons. Note: During hot summer weather, samples may be warmer than 15 °C when first collected.

11. Transport samples to the lab in rigid walled sealed box or cooler. Transport to the lab within 24 hours (ideally the same day). Samples expire 48 hours after collection.