



CSU SPUR
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY



INSTRUCTIONS TO COLLECT AND SUBMIT WATER SAMPLES

To obtain the most accurate results, water samples must be collected properly. This guide outlines the basic steps for collecting water samples correctly.

The CSU Soil, Water, and Plant Testing Laboratory (SWPTL) offers water suitability testing for **household drinking water, livestock drinking water, and irrigation water.**

Regular water testing helps protect the health of **people, livestock, and crops**, and can identify water that is contaminated or polluted.

Tools

1. Use clean plastic bottles (12 oz to 16 oz).

The bottle should be durable and able to seal tightly. **Do not mail water samples in glass bottles or plastic bags.**

Water sampling bottles are available at many Colorado State University Extension offices. Bottles may also be obtained directly from the laboratory by emailing soiltestinglab@colostate.edu or calling **970-491-5061**. Please note that customers are responsible for the shipping cost of bottles.

2. Permanent marker

Use a permanent marker to clearly label the bottle with your name, sample location, and any other required identification information.

3. Cooler and/or ice packs

Use a small cooler or insulated container, along with ice packs if needed, to keep the sample cool during storage and transport. Proper cooling helps maintain sample integrity, especially if there is a delay between collection and delivery to the laboratory.

Sample Collection

To collect a water sample for **irrigation, livestock, or household drinking water**, follow these steps:

1. Label the sample bottles

Clearly label each bottle with your **name, collection date and time**, and **sampling site** using a permanent marker.

2. Flush the water source

Select a faucet and run the water for **five to ten minutes** to flush out any water sitting in the

plumbing system.

For **lakes, streams, or ponds**, collect the sample from **below the surface**, avoiding surface debris.

3. **Rinse the bottle**

Rinse the bottle **three times** using the water you are sampling.

- a. Fill the bottle about **one-third full**.
- b. Screw on the cap and **shake gently**.
- c. Pour out the water completely.
- d. Repeat this process **two more times** to ensure the bottle is well rinsed.

4. **Fill the sample bottle**

After rinsing, fill the bottle **completely to the top** to minimize air space. Screw the cap on **tightly** to prevent leakage during transport.

5. **Refrigerate the sample** until you are ready to mail or drop it off at the laboratory.



Prepare the Sample for Shipping

1. **Fill out the submission form**

Ensure all required information is complete and that the sample name on the form matches the label on the bottle.

2. **Place bottle(s) in a plastic bag**

This prevents potential leaks from damaging the submission form or packaging.

3. **Place the bottle(s) and submission form in a sturdy cardboard box**

Use a durable box that can withstand shipping.

4. **Ship samples with insulation or an ice pack**

To maintain temperature, include insulating material and/or an ice pack.

When shipping, **collect samples later in the afternoon** and ship them **the same day via overnight delivery** to ensure they arrive at the laboratory **within 30 hours of collection** and meet temperature requirements.

5. **Seal and ship the package**

Seal the box securely with packing tape and mail it to the address listed on the submission form.

Soil samples may be **submitted in person** or **mailed** to the laboratory. When mailing samples, place the sample(s) and the completed submittal form into a **sturdy box**. Seal the package securely with packing tape and mail it to the address listed on the submittal form.

You will receive the **soil testing report** within **7 to 10 business days** after the laboratory receives your sample.

Dropping or Mailing Address:

Soil Water and Plant Testing Lab
Terra Building T 3-16
4789 National Western Drive
Denver, CO 80216

Payment

Payment is expected at the time of sample submission. Purchase orders are accepted for city offices, landscape companies, crop and environmental consultants, schools, and universities.

When samples are **mailed**, they must be accompanied by a **check or money order** made payable to **Colorado State University** for the total amount due. If samples are received without payment, laboratory personnel will attempt to contact the customer to obtain payment before processing. Samples will be held for **up to two weeks** while awaiting payment; after this time, they will be **discarded** if payment is not received.

If samples are **dropped off in person at the laboratory**, payment may be made by **credit or debit card**. For questions regarding purchase orders, invoicing, or payment, contact the SWPTL at soiltestinglab@colostate.edu or by phone at **970-491-5061**.