

Testing Your Drinking Water

Questions call (608) 243-0357

What do we do?

The Public Health Madison & Dane County (PHMDC) Laboratory is certified to test drinking water for bacteria, metals, and other chemicals.

What should I test my drinking water for?

PHMDC recommends periodic drinking water testing to guarantee adequate water quality.

Private Well Users: Private well owners should test their water for bacteria and nitrate/nitrite yearly or sooner if changes in taste or odor are noticed. Nitrate is particularly important to test for in households with pregnant women, infants, and young children.

Municipal Water Customers: Municipal water utilities assure delivery of good drinking water, but potential water quality problems, such as lead, copper, manganese, or bacterial contamination, can occur within your home's plumbing. Those drinking municipal water may want to test for lead and other metals or bacteria.

Testing and Costs:

Common Tests	Fee Per Sample
Coliform Bacteria	\$18
Plate Count (Non-Coliform bacteria)	\$18
*Coliform and Plate Count	\$30
Nitrate/Nitrite, Coliform and Plate Count	\$50
First non-metal	\$20
Additional non-metals from same bottle as first non-metal	\$15
First metal	\$25
Additional metals from same bottle as first metal	\$15
Atrazine (Pesticide screening)	\$25
*Trace Metal Package: As, Ba, Cd, Cr (total), Cu, Pb, Mn, Zn	\$100
*Minerals Package: Ca, Hardness (calc), Fe, Mg, Na	\$60
Shipment and Handling of Sample Kits	\$5

Metals

Arsenic (As)
Barium (Ba)
Cadmium (Cd)
Calcium (Ca)
Chromium (total)(Cr)
Copper (Cu)
Iron (Fe)
Lead (Pb)
Magnesium (Mg)
Manganese (Mn)
Sodium (Na)
Zinc (Zn)

Non-Metals

Chloride
Fluoride
Nitrate
Nitrite
Sulfate

* Indicates discounted testing option

Results (except atrazine) are generally available two weeks after lab receives sample. For Rush Order – ask about availability and fees.

Sample Collection

1. Get sample bottles from the Public Health Laboratory. **Only samples in laboratory bottles will be accepted because different types of bottles are needed for different types of tests.**
2. Do not open sample bottles until you are ready to collect the sample.
3. **Review sampling instructions ahead of time.** Some tests require a first draw sample or sanitizing the tap. These instructions and when to use them are described on the back of this page. **It is important that you follow collection instructions for the types of tests you want to get accurate test results.**
4. Complete the information requested on the bottle and on the attached Chain of Custody Form.
5. Samples may be returned to either PHMDC office below during the times listed:

HOURS VARY AROUND HOLIDAYS: BEFORE SAMPLING CALL (608) 243-0357

Laboratory - 210 Martin Luther King Jr Blvd, Rm 516B, Madison

Bacteria: Monday, Tuesday 8 am – 4 pm & Wednesday 8:00am - 2:00pm

Non-metals: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday 8 am – 4 pm & Thursday 8 am – 1 pm

Metals and atrazine: Monday through Friday 8 am – 4 pm

Environmental Health - 2300 S Park St, Suite 2010, Madison

Bacteria and Non-metals: Tuesday, Wednesday 7:45 am – 8:30 am

Metals and atrazine: Monday through Friday 7:45 am – 4:15 pm

Currently, we only accept payment in the form of cash or a check made out to City Treasurer