

PFAS sampling is highly susceptible to contamination due to the widespread presence of PFAS in everyday products such as personal care items, waterproof clothing, and food packaging. Even trace amounts of PFAS on sampling equipment, clothing, or the environment can compromise sample integrity. Strict adherence to sampling guidelines is essential to ensure accurate and reliable results.



Clothing and Materials Requirements

- Wear cotton clothing that has been washed multiple times without fabric softener.
- Do not use Gore-Tex®, Tyvek®, rainwear, or treated clothing and footwear.
- All safety boots and wet weather gear must be PFAS-free. Preferably made from polyurethane and polyvinyl chloride (PVC).
- Use traditional ballpoint pens or pencils.
- Do not use markers, including Sharpies®.
- Use aluminum or Masonite clipboards with loose-leaf paper.
- Do not use waterproof/treated paper or field books, plastic clipboards, Post-its® or other adhesive paper products.
- Only use lab-provided or Ziploc® brand bags for sample storage and shipping.
- Use regular ice only. Do not use chemical blue ice.
- If using an outdoor canopy for rain protection, only touch or move it before and after sampling activities.

Personal Preparation

- Limit the use of shampoo.
- Do not use cosmetics, scented products, moisturizers, or insect repellent on the day of sampling.
- If sunscreen is necessary, use natural products free from PFAS. Examples include: Alba Organics Natural Sunscreen, Yes To Cucumbers, Aubrey Organics, Jason Natural Sun Block, and Kiss My Face.
- Do not bring prepackaged food, drink, or fast food wrappers/containers to the sampling site. *Note: Bottled water is OK in the staging area.*

PFAS Sampling Site Set-Up and Procedures

1. Locate the Entry Point to the Distribution System

(EPDS). The EPDS should be after all treatment and storage tanks and right before the distribution system. The EPDS is the point of compliance where compliance samples should be taken and tagged.

2. Remove any potential contaminants on or around the EPDS (e.g., trash, hoses, tubing, insulation).

3. Flush the sample tap for 5 minutes. If there are flow issues, resolve and flush continuously for 5 minutes. If you notice the water is cloudy or dark in color, continue to flush until the water is clear. If you fill a sample bottle and see sediment sinking to the bottom, discard it. Get a new bottle and collect a new sample to avoid contaminating the preservative. If turbidity is still present in the sample after ample flushing, reschedule the sampling event and return after the issue is resolved.

4. Record details: the System Number, EPDS Number and date and time on the Chain of Custody, field blank and grab sample bottles. Ensure the date and time match on the Chain of Custody with the corresponding sample bottles. If sampling for compliance, notate that on the Chain of Custody.

5. Collect the Samples:

- Wash, rinse, and dry your hands completely before collecting the samples.
- Put on a clean pair of powder-free nitrile gloves.
- Collect the field blank: Pour PFAS-free reagent water from the full field blank bottle (provided by the laboratory) into the empty field blank bottle. Ensure the inside of the field blank bottle and cap are not touched. After sealing the bottle, gently agitate it. Important note: the field blank should be collected near the EPDS, ideally inside the building if the EPDS is indoors.
- Fill the two grab sample bottles: Reduce the flow of the sample tap to the width of a pencil. Remove the bottle cap, ensuring no part of the bottle or cap is touched. Fill the bottles to the shoulders, leaving headspace. Seal the bottles and gently agitate them.

6. Cool the samples. Immediately after collecting your samples place them in a Ziploc® or lab-provided bag and put them on ice in the cooler. Ensure samples reach 4° C ± 2° by the time they reach the lab. Include a temperature blank in the cooler.

7. Deliver samples to the lab. Samples should be delivered within 48 hours of collection to meet method hold times. Confirm sample delivery deadlines with the laboratory.