

## Analytical Environmental Laboratory Sample Acceptance Policy

*The laboratory does not accept samples composed of or containing material that is known to be explosive, radioactive, extremely toxic or biologically hazardous or otherwise potentially harmful to laboratory personnel. Samples containing hydrofluoric acid at concentrations greater than those used for preserving metals standards are also not accepted.*

Each sample set needs to be accompanied by a **chain of custody** (COC) form or one will need to be filled out prior to samples being accepted. Minimum information needed is sample identification, location, date of collection, time of collection (required if hold time is 72 hours or less), sample type, preservative type, collector's name and signature (with date and time), and signature of person relinquishing the sample (if different than collected by – with date and time).

**Custody seals** (if used) are verified to be intact on the cooler and/or the containers. If any custody seals are not intact, the client will be contacted. Samples will need to be recollected or results will be flagged as having broken custody seals. Any samples received damaged where they can possibly be contaminated will not be analyzed for regulatory purposes or will be flagged as such.

Samples are to be collected in the appropriate laboratory prepared/provided **containers** for the types of tests being analyzed. Samples received in the wrong type of container for the tests requested will be reported with qualifiers. AEL will accept samples in client containers that were not designed for sample storage, but any data reported on these samples will be flagged as “received in an unapproved/inappropriate container”.

Most containers from AEL will be pre-preserved. If adding your own **preservative**, this must be done within 15 minutes of sample collection. Samples with preservatives will have their pH checked at log in (excluding most voa vials and oil & grease, which are performed within lab). If the pH is found to be out of the proper range, the sample will either not be analyzed, or any data reported will be flagged as “received with incorrect or insufficient preservative”. The exception to this is metals analysis. These samples will not need qualifying unless the time from adding acid and verifying the pH to be less than 2 prior to analysis is less than 24 hours and samples were collected more than 24 hours prior to analysis.

In most cases, containers need to be filled almost to the top, leaving slight space for shaking purposes. This ensures adequate volume for running specified tests and proper dilution for preservatives. Insufficient **volume** will be addressed on a case by case basis, depending on the test needed, reporting limit required, and ability to obtain additional sample.

Containers must be labeled with identification such as company name, location sampled, and date and time collected. **Labels** need to be water resistant and marked with permanent ink.

Avoid exposing samples to direct sunlight. Samples must be placed in a cooler on wet ice immediately after collection. If you have our glass voa vial with “**Temperature**” marked on it, add this to your cooler concurrently with your first sample. The goal is to lower and maintain the temperature of the samples to between just above the freezing temperature of water to 6°C unless the test specifically notes differently. Biological samples must be kept at less than 10 degrees C. Samples being delivered to the laboratory *on the same day of collection* may fail to meet the temperature requirement, and may be considered acceptable if there is evidence that the chilling process has begun, such as arrival on ice and a sample temperature less than ambient temperature. Any data reported on samples not meeting the above requirements will be flagged as “insufficient thermal preservation”. For adequate cooling to occur sufficient ice must be used and sample containers must be in contact with the ice. Samples transported at ambient temperature will be accepted, but any data reported on these samples will be flagged as “received at ambient temperature”. Samples received frozen or with ice crystals will be addressed on a case by case basis, depending on the ability to obtain additional sample and the reporting requirements.

Any **coliform samples** should be transported in separate coolers than non-sterile samples, or contained in 2 sealed ziplock bags before being placed with other samples.

Samples need to be received within **holding time** requirements. Hold time is factored to the hour for tests with hold times of 72 hours or less, and until midnight of the last day for tests with hold times greater than 72 hours. The hold time for composite samples start after the last sample is collected. Samples that need to be analyzed out of hold time will be flagged as such.