SPECIAL PATHOGENS LABORATORY®
THE LEGIONELLA EXPERTS®

SAMPLING AND SHIPPING
Legionella

CIRCUMSTANCES

- **Suspected Case Investigation**
  Optimal sensitivity is desirable in the context of a case investigation; therefore, two samples, water and swab, should be collected from the same water outlet(s) in the immediate environment of a suspected case.

- **Routine Monitoring**
  For routine environmental surveillance, one sample, either swab or water (or a combination of the two), of an outlet is acceptable.

- **Post-disinfection Monitoring.**
  Ongoing surveillance for monitoring the efficacy of disinfection efforts should include previously positive locations for follow up testing.

SAMPLE COLLECTION

Potable Water

1. Fill out SPL Chain of Custody

2. Use waterproof pen to label bottle and swab with sample location, description, and date.

3. Swab collection:
   a) Remove aerator if present.
   b) Moisten the outlet by briefly turning on the hot water
   c) Insert swab into faucet opening rotating four times against the inner surface as it moves up into the opening (for shower head, rotate swab over entire surface of showerhead 4 times).
   d) Replace swab in transport tube.

4. Water collection: a) Turn on hot water and immediately fill the bottle (≥120 ml). b) Close bottle and invert to mix the sodium thiosulfate neutralizer.

5. Place water sample in shipping pouch with absorbent material and close pouch using zip lock seal.

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SAMPLE COLLECTION

Hot Water Tanks

1. Open the drain valve at the base of the heater or tank and immediately collect 120 ml of the flowing water into the sample bottle.

2. Let the water continue to drain for 15–30 seconds to flush out residual water within the drain pipe.

3. Collect another 120 ml sample into a second sample bottle.

4. Submit both samples, labeled **Immediate** and **Post Flush**.

Cooling Towers

Submerge open bottle just under the surface of water to obtain approximately 120 ml of sample.

Note: Swabs are not considered an appropriate sample for routine testing of cooling towers.

Ice Machines

The ice is processed in the lab after allowing it to melt and is concentrated by filtration. Two or three sample bottles of ice are needed so that the melted volume is at least 120 mL. Use SPL bottles to scoop up ice. If a water dispenser is part of the machine, collect the water as you would from any faucet: turn on the faucet and immediately fill the sample bottle.

Note: A swab of the faucet opening can also be collected and is recommended if assessing the outlet as a source of infection during a case investigation.

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SHIPPING

1. Ship the same day samples are collected for receipt in laboratory.
2. Sample(s) may be refrigerated (2–8° C) overnight if necessary
3. Seal thermal pouch and place in box.
4. Place completed Chain of Custody in plastic document holder and pack in box outside of thermal shipping pouch.
5. Ship overnight Monday–Thursday only to:

Special Pathogens Laboratory
1401 Forbes Ave., Suite 209
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Questions? Contact SPL at 412-281-5335