

MEMORANDUM

TO: Regulated Public Water Systems (PWSs)
FROM: North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality (NDDEQ)
Division of Municipal Facilities, Drinking Water Program

RE: Bacteriological and other Safe Drinking Water Act sampling
guidance during COVID-19 outbreak

DATE: March 24, 2020

Public water systems must continue all Safe Drinking Water Act sampling, including bacteriological and disinfectant residual monitoring in the distribution system during emergencies such as the COVID-19 outbreak. If samplers cannot safely access one or more sampling sites, they should find other suitable locations, so long as those sites are distributed throughout the distribution system. If it is not possible to find alternate sites or to collect samples at existing locations, samples may be collected from outside spigots or hydrants. Precautions such as flushing and/or disinfection of outside apparatuses should always be observed. As always, follow-up sampling will be required for all positive bacterial results.

If an alternative site is used, then operators should (1) write site number "RTCR001" on the sample information sheet, (2) list the actual address, and (3) leave a comment that the usual site/s were inaccessible. The rest of the **Bacteriological Water Analysis** form should be filled out as normal. For the time being, there is no need to clear these temporary changes with NDDEQ prior to collecting samples. Please note that this flexibility is for a limited time and only applies to bacteriological sampling and disinfectant residual monitoring in the distribution system. NDDEQ will notify PWSs when this flexibility is no longer available.

During this time of crisis, it is imperative that the public trust is maintained in their drinking water systems. By continuing to sample throughout the distribution system, operators can assure consumers that their water continues to be safe.

While regulations will not be suspended, the state will be flexible in many instances so long as operators are doing their best. The most important objective is to keep safe water flowing from the water taps. Our drinking water and wastewater operators do great work every day. You are essential, valued, and we appreciate all that you do—now more than ever.

Questions about the bacteriological and RTCR requirements can be directed to Josh Seerup at 701-328-5257 or jseerup@nd.gov; or Jeni Walsh at 701-328-5231 or jwalsh@nd.gov. For questions about other Safe Drinking Water Act sampling requirements, please phone 701-328-5211.