

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS about the SMALL SYSTEM LABORATORY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SSLAP)

What is the SSLAP? The SSLAP is a program designed to provide the Government and Nonprofit Public Water Systems (PWS) serving a population of less than or equal to 100, free laboratory analysis for Total Coliform and Nitrate only. These results will be used to determine compliance. This sampling is not an additional requirement; you will no longer have to sample for these contaminants using your private laboratory.

Which organizations are considered Nonprofit?

For this assistance program the following are considered to be Nonprofit Organizations: an organization formed for the purpose of serving a purpose of public or mutual benefit other than the pursuit or accumulation of profits. The term includes religious organizations and public benefit corporations organized under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Public benefit corporations are those that serve a scientific, literary, education, artistic or charitable purpose that benefits the public. If you believe that we have made an incorrect determination on your status as a Government or Nonprofit Organization, please contact Sandra DeCastro at 317/234-7444.

Do I have to participate?

Although participation is voluntary, we strongly encourage you to take this opportunity to test for total coliform and nitrate for free. **If you choose not to participate and intend to continue sampling with your current lab, please notify our office in writing within two (2) weeks of receipt of this notice.** If we are not notified within the requested time, IDEM will assume that you choose to participate in the SSLAP and put you on a sampling schedule for Total Coliform and Nitrate.

What about my other sampling requirements?

You are required to continue to test for all other applicable contaminants as required under Indiana law at your own expense. (*This only applies to Community and Nontransient Noncommunity PWS*)

When will I receive the bottles?

IDEM has contracted with the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) to mail participating PWS the **appropriate sample bottles with the barcoded reporting forms** for the upcoming year. Please use the forms that accompany the sampling kit. They will be using UPS as their carrier. You will receive all the bottles needed for the upcoming year in time for you to sample during the months specified by your sampling schedule.

How many bottles will I receive?

You will receive the **necessary number of bottles with the barcoded reporting forms** you need to sample according to your sample schedule.

If your system collects sample(s) monthly, you will receive all the necessary bottles to sample for the upcoming year.

If your system collects sample(s) quarterly, you will receive the necessary bottle(s) one month prior to the month you are scheduled to sample.

Please take one sample per month or quarter as specified by your sampling schedule; do not take all your samples at once!

Where are the sample bottles being sent?

The **sample bottles and the barcoded reporting forms** will be sent to your system's physical address. If this address has changed or you would like them shipped to a different address, please contact Sandra DeCastro at 317/234-7444 to make arrangements. **Please note that UPS cannot deliver to a post office box, a street address is required.**

What should I do if the sample bottles are shipped to my attention and I am no longer the contact person for the PWS?

Please contact Sandra DeCastro at 317/234-7444 with the correct information.

What if I don't receive the sample bottles in time to sample according to my schedule?

Please contact one of the Drinking Water Branch staff immediately, or you may contact the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) at 317/921-5874.

What is our sampling schedule?

Your sampling schedule is the schedule determined by IDEM as to when you are required to collect your Total Coliform or Nitrate. **A “Y” on your schedule indicates the month you must collect your samples. Please follow the schedule accordingly.**

When and how do I collect the samples?

You must collect your samples Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday during the month specified by your sampling schedule. Refer to the enclosure for correct sampling procedures.

When and how do I ship the bottles?

Time the sampling with the UPS pick-up schedule in your area to help avoid lengthy transit times. **Samples should be taken as close to the pick-up time as possible and must be shipped the same day.** When shipping multiple kits (e.g. total coliform and nitrate or repeat samples), tape all the samples together and use one shipping label to reduce the cost of shipping. If you have routine UPS service, they will pick-up the samples at no additional cost. If you contact your local UPS provider to schedule a pick-up, they may charge for the pickup. Therefore you may also use a UPS drop box or UPS service provider to send in your samples.

What do I do if I need help filling out the barcoded reporting form or have questions on how to ship the bottles?

Contact Sandra DeCastro at 317/234-7444. A completed reporting form must be included in the return package along with the appropriate bottles to ensure proper processing of the samples.

How will I know if my Total Coliform sample was too long in transit?

You will receive another bottle, shipping label and reporting form. If the reporting form has “**replacement**” written on the bottom of the page, your previous sample was too long in transit (more than 30 hours) and therefore, you are required to collect another sample as quickly as possible on the next Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday.

What if I have a positive coliform result, a nitrate or coliform Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) exceedance?

You will be notified in writing by the IDEM and follow-up sample bottle(s) with reporting forms and labels will be mailed to your PWS in the event of any of the above.

What happens if I don't sample?

Since your system is being offered the opportunity to sample for total coliform and nitrate for free, failure to collect the samples in the time specified will result in an immediate referral to Enforcement.

What is the Drinking Water Fee Program?

The 2003 General Assembly established fees which are designed to support the IDEM drinking water program. The fees are used to defray some of the costs of administering the federal Safe Drinking Water Act in Indiana, including implementing new rules, conducting inspections, enhancing drinking water security, providing compliance assistance, certifying operators, protecting source water, and providing necessary data management.

Are the SSLAP and the Drinking Water Fee Program related?

No, they are not related except that both programs deal with public water systems. The SSLAP was initiated several years prior to the Fee Program. **Even though you are part of the SSLA Program, you are still required to pay your annual fee. You will receive the invoice for this fee in mid-January of each year; the invoice must be paid no later than March 15th.**

Who do I contact if I have more questions?

Call one of the following staff:

Sandra DeCastro at 317/234-7444 for Total Coliform

Dennis Pace at 317/234-7440 for Nitrate

Carol Guidry at 317/232-8472 for Fee Program