

CLIENT GUIDELINES

Microbiological Sponge Sampling Method

This document is not a procedure, it is a list of suggested steps being provided to you to facilitate your creating a sampling procedure in accordance with your quality assurance program and policies. Some steps may have been taken from the USDA, FDA, EPA and CDFA sampling requirements.

However, it is highly suggested that you refer to the requirements of any certification programs you may participate in and/or contractual requirements that may apply to your operation to ensure that you comply with any specific sampling requirements that they may impose.

SUPPLIES:

Water resistant markers	Cooler with gel ice packs
Sterile Whirl Pac bags	Rubber gloves
DE Neutralizing buffer	
Pre-hydrated sterile sponge pack or sterile sponges	

REMARKS:

1. Do not open sterile sample bag until you start sampling.
2. Close the sample bag between each sub-sample in a composite sample.
3. Change rubber gloves between each sample when taking individual samples.
4. Environmental samples should be taken under floor mats, in wall or floor cracks, from drains, in areas of peeling paint, under work tables, equipment crevices and so forth.
5. Samples should be taken just prior to sending them to the lab as analysis should begin within 24 hours of sampling.

SAMPLING:

1. Select the areas to be sampled.
2. Mark the outside of the sterile sample bag with sample identification information.
3. Put on a new pair of disposable rubber gloves.

If utilizing the prehydrated sponge pack:

4. Break the seal on the sterile sample bag.
5. Proceed to the first sample area and remove a sponge from the sample bag.
6. Firmly swab an area of one square meter and return the sponge to the sample bag. Then go to step 13.

If utilizing dehydrated sponges:

7. Break the seal on the sterile sample bag.
8. Open the sterile sample sponge bag and place the sponge in the sterile sample bag. If taking a composite sample repeat this step for the number of sub-samples to be taken.
9. Pour sufficient neutralizing buffer solution into the sample bag to hydrate all of the sponges in the bag.

10. Proceed to the first sample area and remove a sponge from the sample bag.
11. Firmly swab an area of one square meter and return the sponge to the sample bag.
12. If taking a composite sample, close the sample bag and go to the next sample area and repeat steps 7 and 8 with a new sponge until all sub-samples have been taken.
13. Place the samples into a cooler with sufficient blue ice to maintain the as sampled condition during transport to the laboratory facility.

Note: If using water based ice, ensure that it is double-bagged to prevent contamination of the sample.