



Columbia County Central Laboratory

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Water and Sewage System

Bacteria Testing Customer Information

Customers needing a well tested to close on a house usually need a Total Coliform Bacteria test. To have a well tested for coliform bacteria, the customer must:

1. Pay for and receive a sterilized bottle at the Central Laboratory (or Waterworks Administration Office if there is no one available in the Lab).
2. Collect the sample without letting anything but the well water touch the inside of the bottle. Detailed sample collection instructions are included with the sample bottle.
3. Complete the requested label information and affix the label to sample container:
4. Return the sample to the Central Lab **THE SAME DAY IT IS COLLECTED**. The lab accepts samples Monday – Wednesday 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM., Thursdays 8:00 AM -12 PM. **WE DO NOT ACCEPT TOTAL COLIFORM BACTERIA SAMPLES ON FRIDAY or THE DAY BEFORE A COUNTY HOLIDAY.**
5. Complete the shaded portion of a *Total Coliform Bacteria Analysis Request and Report* form at the Lab.

This analysis takes 24 hours. The results will be available no sooner than 24 hours after the sample was delivered to the lab. Laboratory personnel will mail the results to the customer. If the customer needs the results immediately, he may make arrangements with laboratory personnel to pick up the letter from the lab.

If the sample tests positive, the well will have to be retested. **The lab cannot give the customer a letter saying the well is OK until a retest is negative.** For the retest, the customer may pick up another bottle at the laboratory. The lab will perform one free retest.

Also, if the sample tests positive, the County recommends that the customer disinfect the well with chlorine bleach before collecting another sample. There is detailed information on the disinfection procedure on the labs main web page or at the laboratory. The customer may print a copy off the web, or pick up a copy when he picks up the retest bottle.