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## *Sample Collection Procedures*

Most laboratories will collect, transport, and analyze beach samples if directed. Please contact the laboratory of your choice to make appropriate arrangements. If you choose, you may collect and transport samples to an approved laboratory. If you select this method, the following procedures must be strictly followed:

### 1. Sample Submission:

- Be sure to notify the laboratory that will be analyzing the samples prior to collection. The laboratory may have special requirements for submission of samples. Samples must be collected in sterile bottles (provided by the laboratory).
- All samples must be submitted with the appropriate sample submission form provided by the laboratory.
- You must indicate on the sample submission form to send a copy of the results to HEALTH Beach Program either by fax @ 222-4775 or email [amie.parris@health.ri.gov](mailto:amie.parris@health.ri.gov)

**Note:** If a sample exceeds the single sample standard (104 cfu/100ml for saltwater and 61cfu/100ml for freshwater), another sample must be collected immediately. Your beach will not re-open until a clean result is reported.

### 2. Sample Collection from Shore:

- The Environmental Protection Agency's recommendation is for beach water samples to be collected between knee and waist deep, and at least one foot below the surface of the water.
- Samples must be transported in an iced cooler and delivered within 6 hours to the laboratory.
- Coolers carrying samples must be disinfected using alcohol wipes, or similar, prior to each use.
- Sample collectors should use extreme caution not to contaminate sample containers by touching the inside of the cap or bottle.
- Samplers should also take caution not to disturb the bottom sediment while entering the water. Excessive amounts of sediment and benthic material may negatively affect the sample results; often returning inflated bacteriological results.

### 3. Sample Location:

- Beaches that are Less than 300 Linear Feet of Shoreline: A minimum of one (1) sample must be collected. If only one (1) sample is collected, it should be taken from the center of that bathing area.
- Beaches that are Between 300 and 700 Linear Feet of Shoreline: A minimum of two (2) water samples must be collected.
- Beaches that are Greater than 700 Linear Feet of Shoreline: A minimum of three (3) water samples must be collected.
- Samples should be collected with approximately equal distances between stations and the ends of the beach.
- Samples should be clearly labeled to indicate which section of the beach the samples were collected (i.e. North/Center/South or East/Center/West).