



MassDEP

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Department of Environmental Protection



LCCA COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE CHAPTER 4: HOW TO WORK WITH LABS



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OVERVIEW

The water samples you collect must be analyzed by a certified laboratory. Costs for services will vary, and you may want to contact several certified labs. The following website contains [MassDEP's searchable list of certified labs](#). To find a lab that is certified by MassDEP to test for lead and copper, select both chemicals in the "Analyze" list (hold down the Ctrl button on your PC when clicking on each one to highlight both), select "Potable (Drinking Water)" in the "Matrix" list, then click the "Search" button. Scroll to the bottom of the screen to see the list of labs, and note that there may be more than one page of labs. Clicking the "+" button to the left of each lab displays their current certifications.

COMPLETING THE CHAIN OF CUSTODY FORM

The Chain of Custody form identifies the samples taken and tracks the possession of the filled bottles transferred from person to person. This ensures the integrity of the data. The form must be completed during sampling and handed off to the lab with the samples.

A sampling plan, as described in Chapter 3 of the Comprehensive Guide, must be completed before you begin sampling. The sampling plan includes a map of the school that identifies the location and type of drinking water taps. You enter the sample plan into the online LCCA Program Management Tool. Once you have entered this information, the Tool can generate a partially-filled Chain of Custody form. An editable spreadsheet version of the Chain of Custody Form is also available [here](#).

Print out a Chain of Custody form before you begin sampling. Your list of sampling locations should be pre-populated on the Chain of Custody form. The location codes listed on the Chain of Custody form must match the location codes on the bottles.

The figure below is an example of a completed Chain of Custody form. You can see that the information at the top came pre-printed. You need to enter the name(s) of the sampler or samplers and have them initial by their names. At the bottom of the form are the pre-filled location codes and names.

If a fixture is out of service, do not turn it on to sample it. Cross off the location name and make a note that it is out of service. Enter the first draw or flush codes "P" or "F" and the flush time. The flush time should always be 30 seconds. The sampler initials each row.

There is flexibility in completing the Chain of Custody form. If you find numerous locations that are not listed on the form, you can add them. If you need more rows to add additional locations, take a blank form and complete it. You will need to add new location codes and location times and add the next sequential number. If your list of pre-filled sample location codes ends at "070F," the next two samples are "071P" and "071F." If the Chain of Custody form only lists a primary sample "P" for a location, you can add a flush sample for the same location at the bottom of the form.

WORKING WITH THE LAB

A sample drop-off or shipping plan should be pre-arranged with the certified lab you select. Some labs may pick up samples; you should discuss this with your selected certified lab when you enter into your contract with them.

Be sure to prepare and package all samples according to the certified lab's instructions. Properly complete the Chain of Custody form by signing the "Relinquished By" with "Date/Time" and "Received By" with "Date/Time" spaces with the shipping company or laboratory personnel if you deliver directly. Samples must be delivered to the lab within 14 days of collection for proper testing.

You should request that your certified lab analyze your samples for both lead and copper. You should request that the certified lab report the results electronically to MassDEP through its eDEP system.

If you have entered your sampling plan into the LCCA Program Management Tool and the sampling locations on the Chain of Custody match those sampling locations in your sampling plan, your results will be uploaded to the Tool as long as the certified lab reports the results through eDEP. You are strongly urged to identify any follow-up actions at sample locations where the Action Level for lead or copper has been exceeded and enter this information into the Tool.

After receiving the lab results, schools may contact MassDEP to discuss the meaning of the results and appropriate next steps, including implementing short-term and long-term remedial actions, conducting follow-up sampling, and providing notification to the school community. These steps are discussed in Chapters 5 and 6 of the Comprehensive Guide. The Department of Public Health is also a resource for information regarding the health effects of lead and copper and how best to communicate these risks.

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