

Ministry of the Environment

Safe Drinking Water Branch

Laboratory Licensing and
Compliance Program

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Ministère de l'Environnement

Direction du contrôle de la qualité de l'eau potable

Programme de délivrance des permis et
de conformité des laboratoires

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September 15, 2011

TO: Licensed Laboratory Managers

RE: Drinking water samples which do not meet laboratory submission acceptance requirements

When a drinking water sample arrives at a licensed laboratory and does not meet the laboratory's submission acceptance requirements as written in the laboratory's policy and/or procedure (i.e. temperature, pH, preservative, etc) the laboratory should reject the sample. In the event the laboratory's client wants to proceed with the analysis, the laboratory must determine whether the client wishes for the analysis to be performed regardless of the questionable sample integrity or only wants there to be a record of taking the sample in DWIS/LRMA.

If the laboratory does not analyze the sample but the client requires a record of the sample in DWIS/LRMA then the lab must use suitable data qualifiers in the final report to the client and when uploading to DWIS/LRMA. For example, the lab could use the 'No Data' qualifier such as "NDRT for "No Data: Sample Not Refrigerated in Transit"; or "NDIP" for "No Data: Sample Improperly Preserved", on the report to the client. When uploading to DWIS/LRMA, the result field in DWIS/LRMA must be left blank and there must not be any data reported to the client except the appropriate qualifier/comment used by the laboratory. A full list of qualifiers can be found in the DWIS or LRMA manuals.

If the laboratory chooses to accept the sample and analyze it at the request of the client, the laboratory should be aware that this is a variance of their licensed method, and the laboratory is required to document the reason for analyzing the sample. A remark code/comment is required to accompany the result of the sample. For example, the lab could use the remark code "UNR" for "Unreliable: Sample Not refrigerated in Transit". A full list of remark codes can be found in the DWIS or LRMA manuals. The remark code must be uploaded to DWIS/LRMA and appear on the final report to the client. As well, the statement meaning that the sample is not appropriate for the purposes of the Safe Drinking Water Act must accompany the results.

If the sample result exceeds the Ontario Drinking Water Quality Standards, it must be reported as per the Safe Drinking Water Act and applicable legislation and include the appropriate qualifying codes.

Should you require any additional information, please contact your assigned Specialized Laboratory Inspector.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Koene".

Jennifer Koene
Supervisor, Laboratory Licensing and Compliance Program
Safe Drinking Water Branch