eurofins

RECOMMENDED PRESERVATION AND CONTAINER GUIDE

- **AQUEOUS** (Non-Chlorinated)
- **AQUEOUS** (Chlorinated)
- **WASTE OIL**

At Eurofins Environment Testing, we are committed to the highest standards of sample integrity and analytical reliability. From collection through to laboratory receipt, every step in the sample handling process plays a critical role in ensuring accurate and defensible results. To support this, we respectfully request that you adhere to the following best practices when preparing and submitting samples.

SAMPLE COLLECTION CONSIDERATIONS

Care must be taken during sampling to prevent loss or cross-contamination of preservation reagents. Any spillage or inadvertent transfer of preservatives between containers may alter the chemical composition of the sample and compromise the validity of results, particularly for multi-parameter testing. Many analytes are susceptible to degradation, volatilisation, or chemical transformation when exposed to air, light, or temperature fluctuations. Where applicable, appropriate field filtration, immediate sealing, and light protection should be implemented to maintain sample stability.

COOLING AND TRANSPORTATION REQUIREMENTS

To ensure the stability of sensitive analytes, all samples should be chilled to ≤6°C immediately after collection and maintained at this temperature throughout transportation to the laboratory. Microbiological samples should never be frozen and should ideally be kept between 3 and 5°C. Upon arrival, the surface temperature of each sample is measured using a calibrated infrared thermometer, recorded on the Chain of Custody (COC) form, and logged into our Laboratory Information Management System (ELVIS). Please note: Temperature blanks (control bottles for verifying temperature conditions during transport) are generally not required unless explicitly requested, such as in specific microbiological analyses of drinking water.

CONTAINER SELECTION, PRESERVATION, AND HOLDING TIME COMPLIANCE

The preservation of analyte integrity requires strict adherence to specified protocols regarding container type, preservation method (e.g., acidification, cooling), and maximum holding times, which are calculated from the moment of sample collection. Eurofins provides detailed guidance on container selection, preservative requirements, sample volume, and holding time limits for each analytical parameter. For specific test groups, such as metals, nutrients, and volatile organic compounds (VOCs), mandatory requirements include pH adjustment and refrigeration.

SUBMISSION TIMING AND LOGISTICS

To support timely and valid analysis, we recommend that samples arrive at the laboratory with at least 50% of their allowable holding time remaining. This buffer helps ensure that results remain scientifically defensible and compliant with regulatory standards. For parameters with short holding times, we kindly ask that samples not be submitted late on Fridays or immediately before weekends, unless prior arrangements have been made with the laboratory.

AQUEOUS SAMPLES (NON-CHLORINATED: GROUNDWATER, SURFACE WATER, WASTE WATER)

Parameter	Container Type	Lab Analysis Portion (2)	Label	Eurofins Preferred Preservation	Recommended Holding Time (12)	
1.4-Dioxane	G	200 mL		Sodium bisulfate ($NaHSO_4$), Cool ≤6°C	28	days
Acidity	P	50 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C	14	days **
Adsorbable Organofluorine (AOF)	PET / HDPE	3x 125 mL (13)		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C, No Teflon (PTFE) liner	28	days (11)
Alcohols (Ethanol, Methanol)	PT	2x 40 mL (13)		pH <2 (HCl), Cool ≤6°C, Zero headspace (7) (8)	14	days (3)
Alkalinity	P	50 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C	14	days **
Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD)	P	500 mL (13)		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C, Zero headspace	48	hours
Bromide	P	50 mL		Dark, Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C	28	days
Carbon Dioxide (Total)	P	50 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C		Note (5)
Carbon, Dissolved Organic (DOC)	G	40 mL		Field filter (0.45 µm), pH <2 (H_2SO_4), Cool ≤6°C	28	days
Carbon, Total Organic (TOC)	G	40 mL		pH<2 (H_2SO_4), Cool ≤6°C	28	days
Cations (Na, Mg, K, Ca) / Hardness	P	50 mL		pH<2 (HNO_3), Cool ≤6°C	6	months
Cations (Na, Mg, K, Ca) / Hardness	P	50 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C	7	days
Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD)	G	100 mL		pH <2 (H_2SO_4), Cool ≤6°C (1)	28	days (1)
Chloride	P	50 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C	28	days
Chlorine (Residual)	P	50 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C		Note (5)
Chlorophyll a	P	1000 mL (13)		Dark, Unpreserved, Unfiltered, Cool ≤6°C	48	hours ##
Chlorophyll a	P	1000 mL (13)		Dark, Unpreserved, $MgSO_4$ Field filter (0.45 or 0.7 µm), Freeze "residue" ≤-20°C (10)	28	days
Colour	P	50 mL		Dark, Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C	2	days

NOTES

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(3) US EPA recommends 14 days, Australian Standard recommends 7 days.
(4) Ferrous Iron samples must be field filtered.
(5) This analyte should be determined in the field, these tests will not be measured for compliance to holding time but are analysed on receipt
(6) Holding Time is reduced to 24hrs with the presence of sulfides. Contact the laboratory if the presence of sulfides is suspected
(7) Sodium bisulfate is an alternative preservation for VOC analysis upon request
(8) If residual chlorine is present then add 0.008% w/v $Na_2S_2O_3$
(9) Contact the laboratory for instructions.
(10) Do not fill the bottle past the shoulder, to allow room for expansion during frozen storage.
(11) When stored at 0 - 6 °C and protected from the light with the caveat that issues were observed with certain perfluorooctane sulfonamide ethanols and perfluorooctane after 7 days. These issues are more likely to elevate the observed concentrations of other PFAS compounds via the transformation of these precursors if they are present in the sample.
(12) References: APHA, US EPA SW846, ISO 5667.3, EPA VIC. IWRG701 and AS/NZS 5667.1 US EPA Methods 537.1, 533 & 1633A.
(13) Whole bottle extraction is required.
* Requires the samples to be extracted within 7 days and the extract analysed within 40 days.
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CONTAINERS

P Plastic (HDPE or equivalent, all Teflon lined lid)
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PP Plastic (polypropylene, No Teflon liner)
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PET/S Plastic Sterile
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Parameter	Container Type	Lab Analysis Portion (2)	Label	Eurofins Preferred Preservation	Recommended Holding Time (12)
Conductivity (EC) / Salinity	P	50 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C	28 days
Cyanides					
Cyanide (Amenable)	P	60 mL		Dark, pH >12 (NaOH), Cool ≤6°C	14 days (1) (6)
Cyanide (Free)	P	60 mL		Dark, Neutral pH, Cool ≤6°C	14 days (6) ##
Cyanide (Total)	P	60 mL		Dark, pH >12 (NaOH), Cool ≤6°C	14 days (1) (6)
Cyanide (WAD)	P	60 mL		Dark, pH >12 (NaOH), Cool ≤6°C	14 days (1) (6) ##
Dioxins & Furans / Dioxin-like PCBs	G	1000 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C (8)	12 months
Ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid (EDTA) & Nitrilotriacetic acid (NTA)	G	100 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C	7 days
Explosives	G	100 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C	7 days *
Ferrous Iron (4)	P	60 mL		Field filter (0.45 µm), pH <2 (HCl), Dark, Cool ≤6°C, Zero Headspace	7 days
Fluoride	P	50 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C	28 days
Formaldehyde	G	10 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C	7 days
Glycols	G	200 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C	14 days
Glyphosate, AMPA & Glufosinate	G	50 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C (8)	14 days
Halo-Acetic Acids (HAA)	G	50 mL		NH_4Cl, Dark, Cool ≤6°C, Zero Headspace	14 days
Hexavalent Chromium (Cr^{6+})	P	60 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C	1 day
Hexavalent Chromium (Cr^{6+})	P	60 mL		pH >12 (NaOH), Cool ≤6°C (1)	28 days (1)
Iodide	P	50 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C	1 month

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Ion Balance	P	500-1000 mL		Refer to Cations, Fluoride, Chloride, Sulfate, Ammonia, TDS, (EC), Nitrate	
Metals / Metalloids					
Metals (Mercury) – Dissolved	P	50 mL		Field filter (0.45 µm), pH<2 (HNO_3), Cool ≤6°C	28 days
Metals (Mercury) – Total (Recoverable)	P	50 mL		pH<2 (HNO_3), Cool ≤6°C	28 days
Metals (Other) – Dissolved	P	50 mL		Field filter (0.45 µm), pH<2 (HNO_3), Cool ≤6°C	6 months
Metals (Other) – Total (Recoverable)	P	50 mL		pH <2 (HNO_3), Cool ≤6°C	6 months
Methane	PT	2x 40 mL (13)		pH <2 (HCl), Cool ≤6°C, Zero headspace (7) (8)	14 days
Methyl-tert-Butyl Ether (MTBE)	PT	2x 40 mL (13)		pH <2 (HCl), Cool ≤6°C, Zero headspace (7) (8)	14 days
Microbiological Analysis					
Micro – *E. Coli*	PET/S	100 mL		Sterile, Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C (8)	24 hours
Micro – Coliforms	PET/S	100 mL		Sterile, Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C (8)	24 hours
Micro – Endotoxins	PS	30 mL		Non-Pyrogenic, Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C (8)	24 hours
Micro – Free-Living Amoebae (including *Naegleria* Speciation)	PET/S	250 mL		Sterile, Unpreserved, Ambient Temperature (8)	3 days
Micro – Algae / Cyanobacteria	G	200 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C	24 hours
Micro – Algae / Cyanobacteria	G	200 mL		Lugol's Iodine, Cool ≤6°C	6 months
Micro – Other Microbiological Test	PET/S	100 mL		Sterile, Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C (8)	24 hours
Microplastics	G	1000 mL		Unpreserved, Metal Lids	N/A
Monochloramine	P	50 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C	24 hours

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Nitrogen					
Nitrogen – Ammonia	P	60 mL		pH <2 (H_2SO_4), Cool ≤6°C (1)	28 days
Nitrogen – Ammonia	P	60 mL		Field filter (0.45 µm), Unpreserved, Freeze ≤-20°C (10)	28 days
Nitrogen – Nitrite	P	60 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C	2 days
Nitrogen – NOx	P	60 mL		pH<2 (H_2SO_4), Cool ≤6°C (1)	28 days
Nitrogen – NOx	P	60 mL		Field filter (0.45 µm), Unpreserved, Freeze ≤-20°C (10)	28 days
Nitrogen – TKN	P	60 mL		pH<2 (H_2SO_4), Cool ≤6°C (1)	28 days
Nitrogen – TKN	P	60 mL		Field filter (0.45 µm), Unpreserved, Freeze ≤-20°C (10)	28 days
Nitrogen – Total N	P	60 mL		Refer to TKN and NOx	28 days
Nitrosamines	G	100 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C	7 days
Oil & Grease	G	2x 250 mL (10)		pH <2 (H_2SO_4), Cool ≤6°C	28 days
Organophosphorus Pesticides (OPP)	G	200 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C (8)	7 days
Oxygen, Dissolved	P	50 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C, Zero headspace	Note (5)
Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)	PP / HDPE	2x 125 mL (13)		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C, No Teflon (PTFE) liner	28 days (11)
Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)	PP / HDPE	2x 125 mL (13)		Unpreserved, Freeze ≤-20°C, No Teflon (PTFE) liner (10)	90 days
pH	P	50 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C	Note (5)
Pharmaceuticals and Personal Care Products (PPCP)	P	1000 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C	7 days

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Phenolics (Total)	P	100 mL		pH <2 (H_2SO_4), Cool ≤6°C	28 days
Phenoxy Acid Herbicides	G	100 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C (8)	7 days
Phosphorus					
Phosphate (Reactive)	P	50 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C	2 days ##
Phosphate (Reactive)	P	50 mL		Field filter (0.45 µm), Unpreserved, Freeze ≤-20°C (10)	28 days
Phosphate (Total)	P	60 mL		pH <2 (H_2SO_4), Cool ≤6°C	28 days
Polybrominated Diphenyl Ethers (PBDE)	G	1000 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C (8)	12 months
Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCB) Aroclors	G	100 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C (8)	7 days *
Semi-Volatile Organic Compounds (SVOC)	G	200 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C (8)	7 days *
Organochlorine Pesticides (OCP)	G	100 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C (8)	7 days *
Phenols – Speciated	G	100 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C (8)	7 days *
Phthalate Esters	G	100 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C (8)	7 days *
Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAH)	G	100 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C (8)	7 days *
Semi-Volatile Chlorinated Hydrocarbons	G	100 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C (8)	7 days *
Semi-Volatile Organic Compounds – Other	G	200mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C (8)	7 days *
Silica Reactive	P	100 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C	5 days
Solids					
Solids, Total	P	100 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C	7 days *

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Solids, Total Dissolved	P	100 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C	7 days *
Solids, Total Suspended	P	100 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C	7 days *
Sulfur					
Sulfate	P	50 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C	28 days
Sulfide (Total)	P	60 mL		pH >9 (Zinc Acetate+NaOH), Cool ≤6°C, Zero headspace	7 days *
Sulfide (Dissolved)	P	60 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C	24 hours
Sulfite	P	60 mL		EDTA, Cool ≤6°C, Zero Headspace	2 days
Surfactants (Anionic) (MBAS)	G	50 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C	2 days
Total Recoverable Hydrocarbons (TRH)					
TRH (C_6-C_9) / TRH (C_6-C_{10}) / BTEXN	PT	2x 40 mL (13)		pH <2 (HCl), Cool ≤6°C, Zero headspace (7) (8)	14 days (3)
TRH (>C_{10}-C_{40})	G	100 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C (8)	7 days *
Total Recoverable Hydrocarbons (TRH) with Silica Gel Clean-up	G	100 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C (8)	7 days *
Tributyltin (TBT)	G	1000 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C	7 days *
Turbidity	P	100 mL		Dark, Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C	48 hours
Volatile Fatty Acids (VFA)	G	50 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C	28 days
Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC)	PT	2x 40 mL (13)		pH <2 (HCl), Cool ≤6°C, Zero headspace (7) (8)	14 days (3) ^
BTEXN	PT	2x 40 mL (13)		pH <2 (HCl), Cool ≤6°C, Zero headspace (7) (8)	14 days (3)
Halogenated Volatile Organics (HALVOL)	PT	2x 40 mL (13)		pH <2 (HCl), Cool ≤6°C, Zero headspace (7) (8)	14 days (3) ^

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PP Plastic (polypropylene, No Teflon liner)
G Glass (all Teflon lined)
PET/S Plastic Sterile
PS Polystyrene Vial

Parameter	Container Type	Lab Analysis Portion (2)	Label	Eurofins Preferred Preservation	Recommended Holding Time (12)
Monocyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons	PT	2x 40 mL (13)		pH <2 (HCl), Cool ≤6°C, Zero headspace (7) (8)	14 days (3)
Trihalomethanes (THM)	PT	2x 40 mL (13)		pH <2 (HCl), Cool ≤6°C, Zero headspace (7) (8)	14 days (3)
Volatile Organic Compounds – Other	PT	2x 40 mL (13)		pH <2 (HCl), Cool ≤6°C, Zero headspace (7) (8)	14 days (3)
TRH C_6-C_{10} / BTEX for Trip Spikes / Blanks – Prepared in the Lab	PT	40 mL (13)		pH <2 (HCl), Cool ≤6°C, Zero headspace (7) (8)	14 days (3)

AQUEOUS SAMPLES (CHLORINATED: DRINKING WATER, COOLING TOWER WATER, SWIMMING POOL WATER)

Parameter	Container Type	Lab Analysis Portion (2)	Label	Eurofins Preferred Preservation	Recommended Holding Time (12)
Glyphosate, AMPA & Glufosinate	G	50 mL		Sodium thiosulfate ($Na_2S_2O_3$), Cool ≤6°C	14 days
Microbiological Analysis					
Micro – E. Coli	PET/S	100 mL		Sterile, Sodium thiosulfate ($Na_2S_2O_3$), Cool ≤6°C	24 hours
Micro – Coliforms	PET/S	100 mL		Sterile, Sodium thiosulfate ($Na_2S_2O_3$), Cool ≤6°C	24 hours
Micro – Other Microbiological Test	PET/S	100 mL		Sterile, Sodium thiosulfate ($Na_2S_2O_3$), Cool ≤6°C	24 hours

OIL SAMPLES (TRANSFORMER OIL, CAPACITOR OIL, HYDRAULIC OIL, HEAT TRANSFER OIL, DIESEL, LNAPL)

Parameter	Container Type	Lab Analysis Portion (2)	Label	Eurofins Preferred Preservation	Recommended Holding Time (12)
Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCB)	G	20 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C	14 days * (9)
Total Recoverable Hydrocarbons (TRH) – Fingerprint Identification	G	100 mL		Unpreserved, Cool ≤6°C	7 days (9)

NOTES

(1) This test may not require preservation if received and analysed within 24 hours of sampling; this must be pre-arranged with the laboratory.
(2) The specified sample volume is based on the amount sufficient for a single test, not the capacity of the sample containers provided by Eurofins. We recommend that you provide additional sample on the 1st, 11th, 21st, 31st etc sample for performance of Duplicates / Matrix Spikes. (Note however that Matrix Spike determinations are not appropriate for all tests).
(3) US EPA recommends 14 days, Australian Standard recommends 7 days.
(4) Ferrous Iron samples must be field filtered.
(5) This analyte should be determined in the field, these tests will not be measured for compliance to holding time but are analysed on receipt
(6) Holding Time is reduced to 24hrs with the presence of sulfides. Contact the laboratory if the presence of sulfides is suspected
(7) Sodium bisulfate is an alternative preservation for VOC analysis upon request
(8) If residual chlorine is present then add 0.008% w/v $Na_2S_2O_3$
(9) Contact the laboratory for instructions.
(10) Do not fill the bottle past the shoulder, to allow room for expansion during frozen storage.
(11) When stored at 0 - 6 °C and protected from the light with the caveat that issues were observed with certain perfluorooctane sulfonamide ethanols and perfluorooctane after 7 days. These issues are more likely to elevate the observed concentrations of other PFAS compounds via the transformation of these precursors if they are present in the sample.
(12) References: APHA, US EPA SW846, ISO 5667.3, EPA VIC. IWRG701 and AS/NZS 5667.1 US EPA Methods 537.1, 533 & 1633A.
(13) Whole bottle extraction is required.
* Requires the samples to be extracted within 7 days and the extract analysed within 40 days.
** Eurofins | Environment Testing aim is to perform these analyses within 2 days (where sufficient time available).
The holding times may be extended to 28 days if the sample is filtered then frozen.
^ Excepting vinyl chloride, styrene or 2-chloroethyl vinyl ether, for which the holding time is 7 days with the same preservation

CONTAINERS

P Plastic (HDPE or equivalent, all Teflon lined lid)
PT Purge & Trap 40 mL VOA Vial (with Teflon liner)
PET Plastic (polyethyleneterephthalate)
PP Plastic (polypropylene, No Teflon liner)
G Glass (all Teflon lined)
PET/S Plastic Sterile
PS Polystyrene Vial

eurofins

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