



NAVY AND MARINE CORPS PUBLIC HEALTH CENTER

IMPROVING READINESS THROUGH PUBLIC HEALTH ACTION

Drinking Water-Bacteriological Monitoring

What is Bacteriological Monitoring?

Bacteriological monitoring is monitoring and testing for the presence of total coliforms, including fecal coliforms and *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*), in public drinking water systems as required by the [Total Coliform Rule and Revised Total Coliform Rule](#), part of the National Primary Drinking Water Regulations (NPDWR) contained in 40 CFR Parts 141 and 142.

Who is responsible for bacteriological monitoring?

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For public drinking water systems on Navy and Marine Corps installations, OPNAVINST 5090.1E and MCO-P5090.2 require the operator of the public drinking water system to monitor for total coliforms as required by the Total Coliform Rule (TCR) and the Revised Total Coliform Rule (RTCR).

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DOD 4715.05G, the Overseas Environmental Baseline Guidance Document, requires that installations responsible for a public drinking water system must conduct a bacteriological monitoring program to ensure the safety of water provided for human consumption and to allow evaluation with the total coliform-related maximum contaminant level (MCL).

What is the purpose of monitoring and testing for total coliforms?

The purpose of the 1989 TCR is to protect public health by ensuring the integrity of drinking water distribution systems and monitoring for the presence of microbial contamination. The 2016 RTCR is intended to improve public health protection by requiring public drinking water systems more vulnerable to fecal contamination to conduct an assessment to determine whether or not sanitary defects are present and to correct defects.

If a lab confirms total coliform bacteria in your drinking water, the public drinking water system manager must conduct an assessment to determine the route of contamination. If the assessment identifies the cause of the contamination, water system operators can usually correct the problem with system repairs, treatment, or improved operation and maintenance practices. Water system authorities will also notify their customers of the test results as soon as possible. The notification will explain mitigation measures, discuss a timeline of resolution, and provide customers with educational material to support them during the mitigation process until the water is determined to be fit for human consumption.

Submit your questions to: usn.hampton-roads.navmcpubhlthcenpors.list.nmcpbc-drinkingwater@mail.mil

For more information on Coliforms visit:

Learn more: [General Information and Facts \(navy.mil\)](#)