



Microbiology Sampling Protocols

SanAir Technologies Laboratory Swab Sampling Method

This is a general list of procedures to follow in order to ensure quality and accuracy of analysis.

Field Equipment: Sterile Swabs
 Permanent Marker
 Clean, re-sealable bags
 Latex Gloves*

1. While wearing gloves*, peel open the top of the packaging for the swab. Remove the swab and the plastic tube from the packaging. Twist the cap on the tube in order to break the sterility seal. Discard the cap and the plastic packaging.
2. Insert the swab down into the tube and close in order to moisten the cotton tip with the transport medium. If necessary, squeeze the bottom of the tube to ensure wetting solution makes contact with the cotton tip.
3. Using a permanent marker, write a unique sample number or location of sampling on the side of the plastic tube. NOTE: Be sure to check the expiration date on the tube.
4. Remove the swab from the tube, and swab the desired area using a rolling motion. NOTE: The recommended swab area is a minimum of 1 to 4 square inches.**
5. Once finished, insert the swab back into the tube and close tightly making sure the tip comes in contact with the transport medium in the bottom of the tube. Store each swab in a clean, re-sealable bag, if possible.
6. Write the sample information on the SanAir Technologies Laboratory Chain-of-Custody (COC): NOTE: There is no need to fill out the “Turn-Around-Time” as C1/C3 results take a standard 5 – 10 days, and C2 results take a standard 2 – 4 days.

Sample Number (i.e. a unique sample number)

Sample Identification (e.g. location of sampling)

Sample Type (Swab, or S)

Analysis Type (C1, C2, or C3. You may also add a C4 analysis for the detection of Thermophilic organisms. The C4 test is an additional charge onto the C1, C2 or C3 analyses)

Total Sample Area: minimum of 1 to 4 square inches is recommended***



7. Sample the remaining sites, following steps 1 - 6 for each swab.
8. Make sure the box is packed well with sufficient cushioning to avoid breakage during shipping. For best results, swabs should be shipped immediately. If they must be held, keep in a refrigerated unit and ship within 24 hours or pack the samples in a cooler. When using a cooler use only chemical cooling packs; ice is not recommended as it will melt and may seep into the sample. Be sure to bag the Chain of Custody separately to keep it dry.

* If gloves are unavailable, be sure not to touch the tip or shaft of the swab at any time in order to avoid contamination.

** To ensure consistency with all samples, use a template for each sample. Commercially available templates are individually sealed for sterility and are available with a 50 cm² area. To prevent cross contamination, a new template should be used for each sample site.

*** The sample area must be included on the COC as it is needed for final calculations on the report.