



## How to Test Your Water for Sulfolane

If you are concerned about the possibility of sulfolane in your drinking water, this fact sheet offers step-by-step advice for choosing a lab and testing your water. If you decide to proceed with sampling, follow the steps in this fact sheet.

### Ordering a Sample Kit

- Choose a laboratory. Contact the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) for more information on available labs. Testing your water will cost around \$175 for one test.
- Tell the lab you want to test your water for sulfolane and request a sample kit for sulfolane.
- Be sure to ask if the price covers shipping AND return shipping (if shipping is necessary).
- The lab will ask you how many samples you want to take. You will need one sample kit per well. A sample kit will contain several bottles.
- Ask for a pair of disposable gloves for collecting the sample and gel ice for shipping the sample back to the lab.
- You will receive a sampling kit in the mail, or you may pick it up from a local lab. It may be in a cooler inside a box, or it may be a cooler with the shipping information attached. Don't open the box or cooler until you're ready to do the testing to avoid any cross-contamination.

### Sampling Preparation

- Take the gel ice out of the sample kit and put it in your freezer for 24 hours before going on to the next step. You will use this gel ice to keep the samples cold after you take the sample.
- Decide when and where you are going to sample. If you would like to know the presence or level of sulfolane in your well water, it is best to sample water before it goes through any treatment or filtration system (like a water softener or a filter), if possible. Alternatively, sampling out of the sink faucet will be most representative of what you are drinking or cooking with.
- Open the box carefully, so you can use the same box to mail the kit back to the lab.
- Remove the contents of the box or cooler. The sample kit should contain the following:
  - a. Several amber glass sample containers per sample. These bottles will be between 250 milliliters (mL) and 1 liter (L) in volume.





- b. Sampling gloves. If the kit doesn't contain gloves you can usually find them at a local store. You will need one pair of disposable gloves for each sample location.
  - c. A temperature blank. This is a small bottled filled with water that the lab can use to determine the temperature of the cooler when they receive it back from you.
  - d. Chain of custody form. This is a form to document who had ownership of the sample, which would generally originate with you and conclude with a lab representative
  - e. Labels for the sample containers (or sample containers may be pre-labeled).
  - f. A chain of custody sticker for the outside of the cooler.
- If you have any questions, please call the lab or DEC at the number on the last page of this fact sheet.

## Sampling Your Water

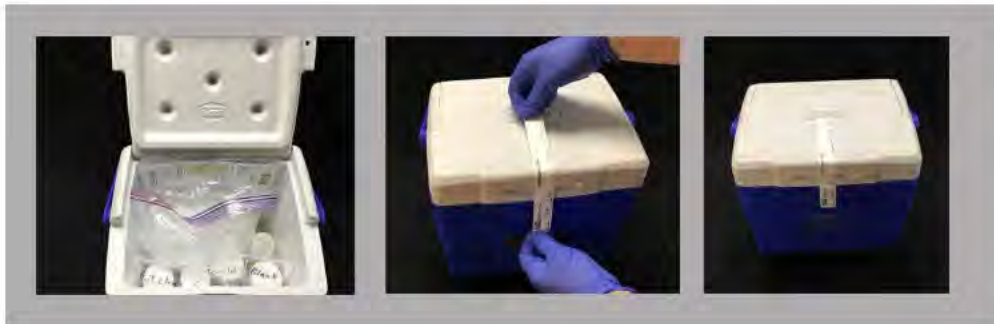
Follow the kit instructions. Kits can vary from lab to lab. If you have questions, please call the lab or DEC.

1. Wash and dry your hands. Put on a pair of disposable gloves.
2. Remove the bottles from the cooler and place the labels on the bottles. You may use whatever you like for Sample ID; one idea would be to use an abbreviation of your address. If the bottles came in bags, label the bags like you labeled the bottles.
3. Take the kit to the sampling location. If you would like to know the presence or level of sulfolane in your well water, it is best to sample water before it goes through any treatment system or filter. Otherwise, use your kitchen or bathroom sink for sampling. Sampling out of the sink faucet will be representative of what you are drinking or cooking with.
4. Turn on the cold water (full speed) and allow it to run for about 1 – 2 minutes.
5. Turn the cold water to low to medium speed. Open the lid of the sample bottle.
6. Fill the sample bottles to the fill line. If there is no fill line, fill the bottle up to the bottom of the neck. Close the bottles.
7. Put the bottles in the bags provided in the sample kit.
8. Seal the bag and put it in the cooler.



## Sample Packaging and Shipment

- Put the temperature blank in the cooler. Make sure all the bottles are upright. To decrease the chance of breakage, you may need to use bubble wrap or other packing material to ensure that the glass bottles don't have room to move around in the cooler. Make sure you leave enough room for the gel ice.
- Put the gel ice in the cooler with the samples.
- Complete the chain of custody paperwork, put it in a Ziploc-type bag, and put it in cooler.
- Close cooler lid and apply the chain-of-custody sticker.



- Put the cooler back in the original box, if provided.
- Tape box, apply the shipping label and bring box to the specified shipper to be sent back to the lab. If the cooler didn't come in a box, put the shipping information right on the cooler and make sure to securely tape the cooler shut. Call the lab and tell them that you've mailed the package. Alternatively you may be able to drop the samples off at a local laboratory.

**This is the end of the sampling. The lab will contact you with the results in approximately 4 weeks from when you send in your samples.**

If you need help reading your results, call DEC.

For more information and assistance with collecting your samples, contact:

**Brian Englund, Chemist, DEC Contaminated Sites Program**

269-7526 or [brian.englund@alaska.gov](mailto:brian.englund@alaska.gov)