

# Back to the Basics

By Randy Hellbusch, Circuit Rider

This fall there seemed to be an abundance of coliform violations. Almost at every system that I have visited recently the coliform issue comes up in the conversation. I haven't asked anyone with DHHS yet, but according to the calls NeRWA has received about bacti hits, I can't help but believe they are way above normal. Sometimes, or should I say most times, many of us feel somewhat rushed and in a hurry for some reason. Taking a bacti sample should not be one of those times. For most of the calls we get, the operator can't understand how the sample could be bad. There hasn't been anything done to the system, no pressure loss, no construction, etc. Below are some basic suggestions that I am sure everyone has heard before, but sometimes it doesn't hurt to step back and review.

1. Be sure to disinfect faucet or sampling point prior to pulling sample.
2. Use hand sanitizer or disinfectant before you pull the sample.
3. Make sure you have a good clean sample site.
4. Be sure to let the tap run long enough to pull fresh water from the main.
5. Be sure the sample bottle is not old. Rotate bottles as necessary if you keep them on hand.
6. Be sure sample bottle is clean and has not been previously opened.
7. Make sure flow from tap is even and not spraying about.
8. Open sample bottle just prior to filling.
9. Do not set cap down or turn upside down and recap bottle immediately.
10. If you are taking more than one sample wash hands each time. As soon as you walk outdoors or open the door of your vehicle, your hands can become contaminated.

With the new groundwater rule, if you have a bacti hit, you don't only need to take the necessary repeat samples, but you also need to take samples at your well sites. Sometimes a little precaution and extra time can save you a lot of time and work later.