

## Damaged Lab Equipment

By Russ Topp

If you were able to attend the Spring Conference this year in Columbus, you have probably already heard this sermon; those of you who were unable to attend, please be aware; lab equipment at the State Laboratory has been damaged because of chlorinated water samples.

Howard Isaacs, Program Manager, with the Department of Health and Human Services, has informed us that occasionally, VOC and SOC water samples arrive at the State Laboratory for chemical analyses that contain chlorine residual from systems that do not normally chlorinate. When the lab analyzes these samples it causes extensive damage to the analyzing equipment. Repairing and recalibrating the equipment can cost as much as \$2,000 or more. Systems that use continuous chlorination receive VOC and SOC sample kits that are marked with a colored sticker. For VOC samples, these systems have been issued and trained on how to use hydrochloric acid to neutralize the chlorine. Once the water sample has been neutralized it is safe for the lab to analyze. SOC samples kits have the proper neutralizing agents already in the sample bottle.

As always, before collecting samples for coliform bacteria run the tap for several minutes and disinfect the tap prior to filling the bacti bottle.

**If you are sampling for any other contaminates such as VOC's, SOC's, IOC's or any other chemical samples, do not chlorinate the tap.** Water samples sent in for chemical analyses are not tested for bacteria.

If you are chlorinating for emergency or maintenance purposes and receive a sample kit for a chemical analyses, please call your State Field Representative or Nebraska Rural Water before collecting the sample. If the sample must be collected before you are finished chlorinating we can advise you on how to collect the sample or come out to assist you. We can also contact the Health Department and see if the sample may be postponed until you are finished chlorinating or order a chlorinated sample kit for you.

Pump installers routinely chlorinate wells after well work has been done. If you have had well work done prior to receiving a sample kit for chemical analyses, be sure all the chlorine has been flushed to waste.

We have been informed that water systems may be charged for damaged lab equipment. I know every water system has better things to spend \$2,000 on than repairing lab equipment.