

Enterococci Update for the BEACH program

For all labs conducting testing for bacteria for ocean and bay beaches, the monitoring parameter has changed from fecal coliform to enterococci. This applies to private and public, ocean and bay beaches.

The required method is USEPA Method 1600. The most current version is from September 2002 (EPA 821-R-02-022). This is a 24 hour test using mEI agar. The agar is incubated at $41\pm0.5^{\circ}\text{C}$ for 24 hours (not 22-24). The holding time is 6 hours (not 8 hours).

Violations occur once the maximum of 104 colony forming units (cfu)/100mls of sample is found for any sample. Resampling must be done for the sites with counts over 104 cfu.

Dilutions should be run for the following situations:

1. To determine the expected density for new sources.
2. To strengthen data for samples that are a known legal, evidentiary sample (i.e. investigations for known spills).

The mEI agar commercially available is being manufactured in loose fitting petri dishes. The method requires the use of tight fitting dishes. The commercial media is not approved for use at this time.

Verification is required:

1. On a monthly basis (10 positive colonies taken through the entire verification process).
2. To strengthen data for samples that are a known legal, evidentiary sample (i.e. investigations for known spills).

A chain of custody as a means of tracking the transfer of samples from collectors to the testing laboratories is required. The Cooperative Coastal Monitoring Program (CCMP) plan will be revised to include this requirement.

Laboratories must obtain certification for Method 1600 before testing can be conducted for this monitoring season which begins in May 2004.

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