TOP 10 LIST OF SAMPLE SUBMISSION ERRORS

1- VOA Trip Blank does not have a separate fieldsheet accompanying it, and misunderstanding of the purpose of a VOA trip blank.

- ✓ The VOA trip blank (3 vials) is treated just as an environmental sample and should always be listed on a separate fieldsheet.
- ✓ The VOA trip blank should accompany the other volatile samples in a cooler through the transport/collection process.
- ✓ It is the sample collector's responsibility to track which samples a trip blank is associated with.

2- Field Tags and/or Field Sheets not filled out correctly and completely.

- ✓ Please make sure dates/times match corresponding field sheets and field tags (i.e., the date/time on the green field tag should match the date/time on the field sheet).
- ✓ Collector Name should be recorded in the following format: First initial, Full Last Name (i.e. J Iverson)
- ✓ Station Location Codes are not unique (Refer to the LabWorks Info page on the intranet portal for more information on assigning Location Codes.)
- ✓ Quick ID Box (small box in top right corner) should match quick ID box on the green field tag. It is easiest to just use 1, 2, 3, 4, etc or A, B, C, D, etc. in the quick ID boxes. The station location codes should have the more descriptive/unique codes.
- ✓ If it is a groundwater monitoring well, PLEASE label it as such somewhere on the field sheet. Most folks will use MW1, MW2, etc. in the quick ID box to identify.
- Please make sure ALL parameters are clearly checked on the field sheet that you are requesting analyses for (i.e., if you submit a turbidity sample, be sure you clearly check turbidity on the fieldsheet).
- ✓ Fecal Coliform field tags should always have the time collected clearly documented on the tag to insure hold times are met.

3- Collectors often use out-dated and incorrect field sheets/forms.

- ✓ We provide updated forms on the DWQ Laboratory Section website via the intranet portal for collectors to download in either WORD or PDF format. This applies to COC forms, Aquifer Protection field sheets, Surface Water Protection field sheets, and UST field sheets.
- ✓ Please use the forms/ field sheets provided as they are the most current and accurate.
- An Aquifer Protection field sheet should be used for groundwater samples; a Surface Water Protection field sheet should be used for surface water samples; and a UST field sheet should be used for UST samples.
- ✓ Please DO NOT make your own field sheet!!

4- There is NO Temperature Blank in the cooler.

A temperature blank (plastic disposable bottle with water in it) must be submitted for every cooler, regardless of whether you have two coolers for the same field sheet. For example, if a cooler is received with volatile samples and no temperature blank, the IR thermometers that we use do not read temperatures through clear glass and we would not be able to verify proper thermal preservation of those samples without compromising their integrity.

5- Not enough ice in the coolers in the summer months/ too much ice in the coolers in the winter months.

✓ Keep in mind the seasonal changes and the need for ice volume to keep your samples cool. In the winter, you will need to slack off of the ice since the temperatures are cooler. In the summer, more ice will probably be needed for the coolers with the increase in temperatures. A good rule of thumb is ½ cooler of ice or less in the winter and ¾ to full of ice in the summer months.

- Also, we often have trouble with getting samples out of coolers when there is so much ice placed on top of the samples. Try putting a little ice in the bottom of the cooler, then the samples, then more ice on top to cool.
- ✓ For safety, as well as billing reasons, packed coolers should not exceed 50 pounds.

6- Field sheets are WET!

- More often than not, we see field sheets haphazardly placed inside coolers. There should be a Ziploc[®] bag securely fastened to the underside of the lid where the field sheets can be placed and zipped up. We often see the bag falling down and sitting in the ice, consequently, getting the fieldsheets soaking wet.
- ✓ The field sheets could also be placed on the top side of the lid UNDER the courier tag to prevent them from getting wet.

7- Samples mis-labeled as to tests, preservatives, etc.

✓ Double-checking the field sheets/ tags before submitting to the lab would prevent many of these mistakes to ensure the correct tests, preservatives, and IDs are labeled correctly on the field tags.

8- Improper Containers Used for Sample Collection. The Preservation and Hold Time Tables for Aquifer Protection/Surface Water Protection list the program- or EPA-approved containers.

- ✓ Chlorophyll *a* samples always requires a BROWN plastic 500 mL bottle. This is essential to prevent photo- degradation of chlorophyll.
- ✓ Sediment Jars—there are two different sizes of sediment jars for volatile analysis and semivolatile/pesticide analysis.
 - i. For volatile organics soil samples, the 4 oz. sediment jar is required.
 - ii. For semi-volatile/pesticide soil samples, the 8 oz. sediment jar is required.
- ✓ Sulfide Vials—please use ONLY the sulfide vials that we supply. They are pre-preserved with zinc acetate and labeled as such. Do not use VOA vials or your own clean vials.

9- Hold Times are EXCEEDED!

- ✓ Again, the preservation and hold time tables located on the Laboratory Section website lists the approved hold times. Samples exceeding these hold times will either be rejected or the results will be qualified as uncertain.
- Please consider the time required to process your sample, especially after they are received here at the lab. For example, if you collect a chlorophyll sample at 8:45 AM, we may not receive the chlorophyll sample until 8:30AM the next day, therefore, you may want to consider collecting a little later in the day if your sample has a short hold time. Even though the lab received the sample within the 24 hr hold time, the analyst may not receive the sample until 26 hours later due to processing. This same concept applies to Fecal Coliform and other parameters with short holding times.
- A courtesy call or email to the lab is encouraged for submission of BOD, MBAS, NO2 and NO3 samples. This will ensure the lab/analysts can prepare for the set-up of the samples and also to be sure there will be staff available to come in on the weekend should it be necessary to complete the analysis of the sample.

10- Incomplete Chain of Custody (COC) Forms and Procedures to ensure Chain of Custody is upheld for legal purposes. The Chain of Custody will be dropped if protocol is not followed. Please refer to the Sample Submission Guidance Document for further explanation in addition to the items listed below.

- ✓ Corresponding COC form must accompany field sheets. (i.e., Surface Water Protection COC form for Surface Water Protection field sheet, Aquifer Protection COC for Aquifer Protection field sheet, etc.).
- ✓ "Sample Collector's signature, Relinquished by, Date, Time, Sealed By, and Method of Shipment," must ALL be filled in BY THE COLLECTOR where the appropriate spaces are designated for such in order for the chain of custody to be upheld.

- The red Chain of Custody seal MUST be placed either on the sample bottle/lid or wrapped around a bag containing the sample bottles inside of the cooler with the collector's initial and date in order for the chain of custody to be upheld. It is NOT recommended that COC seals be placed on the outside of coolers as they may tear easily during transport.
- \checkmark Please check the Chain of Custody box on the Field sheet.