Standard operating procedure (SOP) · WAT-SOP-001 · Version 1.1 · Approved by the ASF Expert Committee

Supports: 2B.3

At a glance

- Test the water on the schedule the committee sets, at the points listed in the schedule.
- Record every result on WAT-FRM-001 with the date and who tested.
- If a result is outside the limit, act at once: isolate the outlet, inform the infection prevention lead, and retest.
- Keep records for the last 3 months available for audit.
- Stop and get help straight away if: a result is outside the limit for a clinical outlet, or the supply is interrupted for patient care areas.

1. Purpose

To make sure water used for drinking, washing, dialysis, sterilisation and clinical care is safe, tested on a schedule, and that interruptions are managed [EC].

2. Scope

Applies to	Facilities, infection prevention, laboratory and clinical staff who use water
Locations	All water outlets and storage tanks at the facility
When	On the test schedule, after any repair or interruption, and after any abnormal result
Does not apply to	Dialysis water, which has its own standard (SOP-105 and the dialysis service)

3. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Outlet	Any tap, shower or dispensing point
Water test	A test for microbiological and chemical quality as the schedule sets
Limit	The value set by the national standard or the committee (EC) above which action is needed

4. Background

Municipal supply is not automatically safe inside a building. Pipes, tanks and stagnant outlets can introduce contamination, including Legionella and other organisms. Criterion 2B.3 requires testing on a schedule and a plan for interruption.

5. Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility	Competence
Facilities manager	Owns the schedule; arranges sampling and repairs; keeps the plan	Facilities and water systems competence
Infection prevention lead	Advises on results; decides on outlet isolation with the facilities manager	Infection prevention competence
Laboratory (or accredited external lab)	Tests samples and reports results within the agreed time	Accredited testing

6. Materials and equipment

Item	Requirement	Condition
Sampling kit	Sterile bottles and labels, supplied by the testing lab	In date
Water test schedule (WAT-PLN-001)	Current	Available to facilities
Water test record (WAT-FRM-001)	Current	Used for each result

7. Safety

- Wear gloves when sampling. Wash hands before and after.
- Do not use a tap that is isolated or flagged as unsafe.
- Keep disinfectant and cleaning products away from sampling points.

8. Before you start

- Check the schedule for the day.
- Check the sample bottles are sterile and labelled.

9. Procedure

Step 1. Take the sample on schedule.

- Sample from the points on the schedule, using the sampling method of the lab.
- Label with date, time, point and sampler.
- Send to the lab within the time the lab requires.

Key point: A sample from the wrong point or after flushing the tap gives a false result.

Step 2. Record the result.

- Enter each result on WAT-FRM-001 when received, with the limit and the status (within limit or not).
- File the lab report.

Key point: The record must match the lab report.

Step 3. If a result is outside the limit.

- Inform the infection prevention lead and the facilities manager the same day.
- Isolate the outlet and label it “do not use for drinking or clinical use”.
- Flush and disinfect the outlet as the plan says, then retest.
- Record each step and the time.

Key point: An isolated outlet is safer than a suspicious one still in use.

Step 4. Respond to interruptions.

- Follow the contingency plan (WAT-PLN-001): tell the clinical teams, use the stored water supply, and restrict use to essential purposes.
- Record the start and end of the interruption and the actions.

Key point: The plan is what keeps patients safe while the supply is off.

Step 5. Review the results.

- Review all results each quarter with the infection prevention lead.
- Look for trends and repeated failures at the same point.

Key point: A repeated failure at one point means the pipework or the outlet needs fixing, not just retesting.

10. Decision points

- If a result is outside the limit for a patient care outlet, the outlet is out of use until retested within limit.

11. Special situations

Situation	Action
After any repair or new plumbing	Test before use, using the post-repair test (EC).

12. Escalation

- Out-of-limit results and interruptions go to the infection prevention lead and the chief executive the same day.

13. Monitoring

Measure	Target	Frequency	Owner	If not met
Tests done on schedule	100%	Monthly	Facilities manager	Escalate to chief executive
Out-of-limit results acted on the same day	100%	Each result	Infection prevention lead	Review with chief executive
Interruptions with plan followed and recorded	100%	Each event	Facilities manager	Review of plan

14. Records

Record	Kept in	Retention

WAT-FRM-001 Water Test Record	Facilities file	At least 3 months on site, then archived for the period set by the facility’s records policy years
Lab reports	Facilities file	the period set by the facility’s records policy years

15. Training

- Facilities staff are trained in sampling and in responding to results (EC).
- Clinical staff are briefed on the interruption plan.

16. Related documents

ID	Title	Use
WAT-PLN-001	Water Interruption Contingency Plan	Used in step 4
WAT-FRM-001	Water Test Record	Used in step 2
SOP-037	Infection Prevention and Control Procedure (generic)	Hand washing with safe water
SOP-105	Dialysis Water Testing Standard (generic)	Separate standard for dialysis

17. Evidence

Reference	Note
E-009	ASF Expert Committee consensus. Test parameters, frequency and limits must be set against national drinking water and healthcare water standards before approval.

18. Change history

Version	Date	What changed	Approval
1.0	the date of approval	First version	Approved by the ASF Expert Committee
1.1	the date of approval	Internal quality review: corrected cross-references, status wording and document control	Approved by the ASF Expert Committee

E-learning for this document

- **Water Source Testing & Documentation** (WATER-01)
- Legionella Prevention & Hot Water Systems (WATER-03)

References

- Accréditation Sans Frontières (2026). ASF Expert Committee consensus on Standard 1. (E-009)

Download this document as PDF

Related standard

- **Standard 2: Governance and Safety Culture**

Download this document as an editable Word file