STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE FOR LOW-STRESS (Low Flow) / MINIMAL DRAWDOWN GROUND-WATER SAMPLE COLLECTION

INTRODUCTION

The collection of "representative" water samples from wells is neither straightforward nor easily accomplished. Ground-water sample collection can be a source of variability through differences in sample personnel and their individual sampling procedures, the equipment used, and ambient temporal variability in subsurface and environmental conditions. Many site inspections and remedial investigations require the sampling at ground-water monitoring wells within a defined criterion of data confidence or data quality, which necessitates that the personnel collecting the samples are trained and aware of proper sample-collection procedures.

The purpose of this standard operating procedure (SOP) is to provide a method which minimize the amount of impact the purging process has on the ground water chemistry during sample collection and to minimize the volume of water that is being purged and disposed. This will take place by placing the pump intake within the screen interval and by keeping the drawdown at a minimal level (0.33 feet) (Puls and Barcelona, 1996) until the water quality parameters have stabilized and sample collection is complete. The flow rate at which the pump will be operating will be depended upon both hydraulic conductivity of the aquifer and the drawdown with the goal of minimizing the drawdown. The flow rate from the pump during purging and sampling will be at a rate that will not compromise the integrity of the analyte that is being sampled. This sampling procedure may or may not provide a discrete ground water sample at the location of the pump intake. The flow of ground-water to the pump intake will be dependent on the distribution of the hydraulic conductivity (K) of the aquifer within the screen interval. In order to minimize the drawdown in the monitoring well a low-flow rate must be utilized. Low-flow refers to the velocity with which water enters the pump intake from the surrounding formation in the

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immediate vicinity of the well screen. It does not necessarily refer to the flow rate of water discharged at the surface, which can be affected by flow regulators or restrictions (Puls and Barcelona, 1996). This SOP was developed by the Superfund/RCRA Ground Water Forum and draws from an USEPA's Ground Water Issue Paper, Low-Flow (Minimal Drawdown) Ground-Water Sampling Procedure, by Robert W. Puls and Michael J. Barcelona. Also, available USEPA Regional SOPs regarding Low-Stress(Low Flow)Purging and Sampling were used for this SOP.

SCOPE AND APPLICATION

This SOP should be used primarily at monitoring wells which have a screen or an open interval with a length of ten feet or less and can accept a sampling device which minimizes the disturbance to the aquifer or the water column in the well casing. The screen or open interval should have been optimally located to intercept an existing contaminant plume(s) or along flowpaths of potential contaminant releases. Knowledge of the contaminant distribution within the screen interval is highly recommended and is essential for the success of this sampling procedure. The ground-water samples which are collected using this procedure are acceptable for the analyses of ground-water contaminants which may be found at Superfund and RCRA contamination sites. The analytes may be volatile, semi-volatile organic compounds, pesticides, PCBs, metals and other inorganic compounds. The screened interval should be located within the contaminant plume(s) and the pump intake should be placed at or near the known source of the contamination within the screened interval. It is critical to place the pump intake in the exact location or depth for each sampling event. This argues for the use of dedicated, permanently installed sampling devices whenever possible. If this is not possible then the placement of the pump intake should be positioned with a calibrated sampling pump hose sounded with a weighted-tape or using a pre-measured hose. The pump intake should not be placed near the bottom of the screened interval to avoid disturbing any sediment that may have settled at the bottom of the well.

Water-quality indicator parameters and water levels must be measured during purging, prior to sample collection. Stabilization of the water quality parameters as well as

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monitoring water levels are a prerequisite to sample collection. The water-quality indicator parameters which are recommended include the following: specific electrical conductance, dissolved oxygen, turbidity, oxidation-reduction potential, pH, and temperature. The latter two parameters are useful data, but are generally insensitive as purging parameters. Oxidation-reduction potential may not always be appropriate stabilization parameter, and will depend on site-specific conditions. However, readings should be recorded because of its value as a double check for oxidation conditions, and for fate and transport issues. Also, when samples are collected for metals, semi-volatile organic compounds, and pesticides every effort must be made to reduce turbidity to 10 NTUs or less (not just the stabilization of turbidity) prior to the collection of the water sample. In addition to the measurement of the above parameters, depth to water must be measured during purging (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 1995).

Proper well construction, development and maintenance are essential for any ground-water sampling procedure. Prior to conducting the field work, information on the construction of the well and well development should be obtained and that information factored into the site specific sampling procedure. The attached Sampling Checklist is an example of the type of information that is useful.

Stabilization of the water-quality indicator parameters is the criterion for sample collection. But if stabilization is not occurring and the procedure has been strictly followed, then sample collection can take place once three (minimum) to six (maximum) casing volumes have been removed (Schuller et al., 1981 and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency., 1986; Wilde et al., 1998; Gibs and Imbrigiotta., 1990). The specific information on what took place during purging must be recorded in the field notebook or in the ground-water sampling log.

This SOP is not to be used where non-aqueous phase liquids (immiscible fluids) are present in the monitoring well.

EQUIPMENT

- Depth-to-water measuring device - An electronic water-level indicator or steel tape and chalk, with marked intervals of

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0.01 foot. Interface probe for determination of liquid products (NAPL) presence, if needed.

- Steel tape and weight - Used for measuring total depth of well. Lead weight should not be used.
- Sampling pump - Submersible or bladder pumps with adjustable rate controls are preferred. Pumps are to be constructed of inert materials, such as stainless steel and teflon®. Pump types that are acceptable include gear and helical driven, centrifugal (low-flow type) and air-activated piston. Adjustable rate, peristaltic pump can be used when the depth to water is 20 feet or less.
- Tubing - Teflon® or Teflon® lined polyethylene tubing is preferred when sampling for organic compounds. Polyethylene tubing can be used when sampling inorganics.
- Power Source - If a combustion type (gasoline or diesel-driven) generator is used, it must be placed downwind of the sampling area.
- Flow measurement supplies - flow meter, graduated cylinder and a stop watch.
- Multi-Parameter meter with flow-through-cell - This can be one instrument or more contained in a flow-through cell. The water-quality indicator parameters which must be monitored are pH, ORP/EH, dissolved oxygen (DO), turbidity, specific conductance, and temperature. Turbidity readings must be collected before the flow cell because of the potential for sediment buildup which can bias the turbidity measurements. Calibration fluids for all instruments should be NIST-traceable and there should be enough for daily calibration through-out the sampling event. The inlet of the flow cell must be located near the bottom of the flow cell and the outlet near the top. The size of the flow cell should be kept to a minimum and a closed cell is preferred. The flow cell must not contain any air or gas bubbles when monitoring for the water-quality indicator parameters.
- Decontamination Supplies - Including a reliable and documented source of distilled water and any solvents (if used). Pressure sprayers, buckets or decontamination tubes for pumps, brushes and non-phosphate soap will also be needed.
- Sample bottles, sample preservation supplies, sample tags or labels and chain of custody forms.
- Approved Field Sampling and Quality Assurance Project Plan.
- Well construction data, field and water quality data from the previous sampling event.
- Well keys and map of well locations.

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- Field notebook, ground-water sampling logs and calculator. A suggested field data sheet (ground-water sampling record or ground-water sampling log) are provided in the attachment.
- Filtration equipment, if needed. An in-line disposable filter is recommended.
- Polyethylene sheeting which will be placed on ground around the well head.
- Personal protective equipment specified in the site Health and Safety Plan.
- Air monitoring equipment as specified in the Site Health and Safety Plan.
- Tool box - All needed tools for all site equipment used.
- A 55-gallon drum or container to contain the purged water.

Materials of construction of the sampling equipment (bladders, pumps, tubing, and other equipment that comes in contact with the sample) should be limited to stainless steel, Teflon®, glass and other inert material. This will reduce the chance of the sampling materials to alter the ground-water where concentrations of the site contaminants are expected to be near the detection limits. The sample tubing diameter thickness should be maximized and the tubing length should be minimized so that the loss of contaminants into and through the tubing walls may be reduced and the rate of stabilization of ground-water parameters is maximized. The tendency of organics to sorb into and out of material makes the appropriate selection of sample tubing material critical for trace analyses (Pohlmann and Alduino, 1992; Parker and Ranney, 1998).

PURGING AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES

The following describes the purging and sampling procedures for the Low-Stress (Low Flow)/ Minimal Drawdown method for the collection of ground-water samples. These procedures also describe steps for dedicated and non-dedicated systems.

<u>Pre-Sampling Activities</u> (Non-dedicated and dedicated system)

1. Sampling locations must begin at the monitoring well with the least contamination, generally up-gradient or furthest from the site or suspected source. Then proceed systematically to the monitoring wells with the most contaminated ground water.

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2. Check and record the condition of the monitoring well for damage or evidence of tampering. Lay out polyethylene sheeting around the well to minimize the likelihood of contamination of sampling/purging equipment from the soil. Place monitoring, purging and sampling equipment on the sheeting.

3. Unlock well head. Record location, time, date and appropriate information in a field logbook or on the ground-water sampling log (See attached ground-water sampling record and ground-water sampling log as examples).

4. Remove inner casing cap.

5. Monitor the headspace of the monitoring well at the rim of the casing for volatile organic compounds (VOC) with a Photo-ionization detector (PID) or Flame ionization detector (FID), and record in the logbook. If the existing monitoring well has a history of positive readings of the headspace, then the sampling must be conducted in accordance with the Health and Safety Plan.

6. Measure the depth to water (water level must be measured to nearest 0.01 feet) relative to a reference measuring point on the well casing with an electronic water level indicator or steel tape and record in logbook or ground-water sampling log. If no reference point is found, measure relative to the top of the inner casing, then mark that reference point and note that location in the field logbook. Record information on depth to ground water in the field logbook or ground water sampling log. Measure the depth to water a second time to confirm initial measurement; measurement should agree within 0.01 feet or re-measure.

7. Check the available well information or field information for the total depth of the monitoring well. Use the information from the depth of water in step six and the total depth of the monitoring well to calculate the volume of the water in the monitoring well or the volume of one casing. Record information in field logbook or ground-water sampling log.

Purging and Sampling Activities

8A. Non-dedicated system - Place the pump and support equipment at the wellhead and slowly lower the pump and tubing down into the monitoring well until the location of the pump intake is set

at a pre-determined location within the screen interval. The placement of the pump intake should be positioned with a calibrated sampling pump hose, sounded with a weighted-tape, or using a pre-measured hose. Refer to the available monitoring well information to determine the depth and length of the screen interval. Measure the depth of the pump intake while lowering the pump into location. Record pump location in field logbook or groundwater sampling log.

8B. Dedicated system - Pump has already been installed, refer to the available monitoring well information and record the depth of the pump intake in the field logbook or ground-water sampling log.

9. Non-dedicated system and dedicated system - Measure the water level (water level must be measured to nearest 0.01 feet) and record information on the ground-water sampling log, leave water level indicator probe in the monitoring well.

10. Non-dedicated and dedicated system - Connect the discharge line from the pump to a flow-through cell. A "T" connection is needed prior to the flow cell to allow for the collection of water for the turbidity measurements. The discharge line from the flow-through cell must be directed to a container to contain the purge water during the purging and sampling of the monitoring well.

11. Non-dedicated and dedicated system - Start pumping the well at a low flow rate (0.2 to 0.5 liter per minute) and slowly increase the speed. Check water level. Maintain a steady flow rate while maintaining a drawdown of less than 0.33 feet (Puls and Barcelona, 1996). If drawdown is greater than 0.33 feet lower the flow rate. 0.33 feet is a goal to help guide with the flow rate adjustment. It should be noted that this goal may be difficult to achieve under some circumstances due to geologic heterogeneities within the screened interval, and may require adjustment based on site-specific conditions and personal experience (Puls and Barcelona, 1996).

12. Non-dedicated and dedicated system - Measure the discharge rate of the pump with a graduated cylinder and a stop watch. Also, measure the water level and record both flow rate and water level on the groundwater sampling log. Continue purging, monitor and record water level and pump rate every three to five minutes during purging. Pumping rates should be kept at minimal flow to

ensure minimal drawdown in the monitoring well.

13. Non-dedicated and dedicated system - During the purging, a minimum of one tubing volume (including the volume of water in the pump and flow cell) must be purged prior to recording the water-quality indicator parameters. Then monitor and record the water-quality indicator parameters every three to five minutes. The water-quality indicator field parameters are turbidity, dissolved oxygen, specific electrical conductance, pH, redox-potential and temperature. Oxidation-reduction potential may not always be an appropriate stabilization parameter, and will depend on site-specific conditions. However, readings should be recorded because of its value as a double check for oxidizing conditions. Also, for the final dissolved oxygen measurement, if the readings are less than 1 milligram per liter, it should be collected and analyze with the spectrophotometric method (Wilde et al., 1998 Wilkin et al., 2001), colorimetric or Winkler titration (Wilkin et al., 2001). The stabilization criterion is based on three successive readings of the water quality field parameters; the following are the criteria which must be used:

Parameter	Stabilization Criteria	Reference
pH	± 0.1 pH units	Puls and Barcelona, 1996; Wilde et al.,
Specific electrical conductance (SEC)	± 3% FS/cm	Puls and Barcelona, 1996
oxidation-reduction potential (ORP)	± 10 millivolts	Puls and Barcelona 1996
turbidity	± 10 % NTUs (when turbidity is greater than 10 NTUs)	Puls and Barcelona, 1996 Wilde et al., 1998
dissolved oxygen	± 0.3 milligrams per liter	Wilde et al., 1998

Once the criteria have been successfully met indicating that the water quality indicator parameters have stabilized, then sample collection can take place.

14. If a stabilized drawdown in the well can't be maintained at 0.33 feet and the water level is approaching the top of the screened interval, reduce the flow rate or turn the pump off (for 15 minutes) and allow for recovery. It should be noted whether or not the pump has a check valve. A check valve is required if the pump is shut off. Under no circumstances should the well be

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pumped dry. Begin pumping at a lower flow rate, if the water draws-down to the top of the screened interval again turn pump off and allow for recovery. If two tubing volumes (including the volume of water in the pump and flow cell) have been removed during purging then sampling can proceed next time the pump is turned on. This information should be noted in the field notebook or ground-water sampling log with a recommendation for a different purging and sampling procedure.

15. Non-dedicated and dedicated system - Maintain the same pumping rate or reduce slightly for sampling (0.2 to 0.5 liter per minute) in order to minimize disturbance of the water column. Samples should be collected directly from the discharge port of the pump tubing prior to passing through the flow-through cell. Disconnect the pump's tubing from the flow-through-cell so that the samples are collected from the pump's discharge tubing. For samples collected for dissolved gases or Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) analyses, the pump's tubing needs to be completely full of ground water to prevent the ground water from being aerated as the ground water flows through the tubing. The sequence of the samples is immaterial unless filtered (dissolved) samples are collected and they must be collected last (Puls and Barcelona, 1996). All sample containers should be filled with minimal turbulence by allowing the ground water to flow from the tubing gently down the inside of the container. When filling the VOC samples a meniscus must be formed over the mouth of the vial to eliminate the formation of air bubbles and head space prior to capping. In the event that the ground water is turbid, (greater then 10 NTUs), a filtered metal (dissolved) sample also should be collected.

If filtered metal sample is to be collected, then an in-line filter is fitted at the end of the discharge tubing and the sample is collected after the filter. The in-line filter must be pre-rinsed following manufacturer's recommendations and if there are no recommendations for rinsing, a minimum of 0.5 to 1 liter of ground water from the monitoring well must pass through the filter prior to sampling.

16A. Non-dedicated system - Remove the pump from the monitoring well. Decontaminate the pump and dispose of the tubing if it is non-dedicated.

16B Dedicated system - Disconnect the tubing that extends from the plate at the wellhead (or cap) and discard after use.

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17. Non-dedicated system - Before locking the monitoring well, measure and record the well depth (to 0.1 feet).
Measure the total depth a second time to confirm initial measurement; measurement should agree within 0.01 feet or re-measure.

18. Non-dedicated and dedicated system - Close and lock the well.

DECONTAMINATION PROCEDURES

Decontamination procedures for the water level meter and the water quality field parameter sensors.
The electronic water level indicator probe/steel tape and the water-quality field parameter sensors will be decontaminated by the following procedures:
1. The water level meter will be hand washed with phosphate free detergent and a scrubber, then thoroughly rinsed with distilled water.

2. Water quality field parameter sensors and flow-through cell will be rinsed with distilled water between sampling locations. No other decontamination procedures are necessary or recommended for these probes since they are sensitive. After the sampling event, the flow cell and sensors must be cleaned and maintained per the manufacturer's requirements.

Decontamination Procedure for the Sampling Pump

Upon completion of the ground water sample collection the sampling pump must be properly decontaminated between monitoring wells. The pump and discharge line including support cable and electrical wires which were in contact with the ground water in the well casing must be decontaminated by the following procedure:

1. The outside of the pump, tubing, support cable and electrical wires must be pressured sprayed with soapy water, tap water and distilled water. Spray outside of tubing and pump until water is flowing off of tubing after each rinse. Use bristle brush to help remove visible dirt and contaminants.
2. Place the sampling pump in a bucket or in a short PVC casing (4-in. diameter) with one end capped. The pump placed in this device must be completely submerged in the water. A small amount of phosphate free detergent must be added to the potable water

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(tap water).
3. Remove the pump from the bucket or 4-in. casing and scrub the outside of the pump housing and cable.
4. Place pump and discharge line back in the 4-in. casing or bucket, start pump and re-circulate this soapy water for 2 minutes (wash).
5. Re-direct discharge line to a 55-gallon drum, continue to add 5 gallons of potable water (tap water)or until soapy water is no longer visible.
6. Turn pump off and place pump into a second bucket or 4-in. Casing which contains tap water, continue to add 5-gallons of tap water (rinse).
7. Turn pump off and place pump into a third bucket or 4-in. casing which contains distilled/deionized water, continue to add three to five gallons of distilled/deionized water (final rinse).
8. If a hydrophobic contaminant is present (such as separate phase, high levels of PCB's, etc.) An additional decon step, or steps, may be added. For example, an organic solvent, such as reagent-grade isopropanol alcool may be added as a first spraying/bucket prior to the soapy water rinse/bucket.

FIELD QUALITY CONTROL

Quality control (QC) samples must be collected to verify that sample collection and handling procedures were performed adequately and that they have not compromised the quality of the ground water samples. The appropriate EPA program guidance must be consulted in preparing the field QC sample requirements for the site-specific Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP).

There are five primary areas of concern for quality assurance (QA) in the collection of representative ground-water samples:

1. Obtaining a ground-water sample that is representative of the aquifer or zone of interest in the aquifer. Verification is based on the field log documenting that the field water-quality parameters stabilized during the purging of the well, prior to sample collection.
2. Ensuring that the purging and sampling devices are made of materials, and utilized in a manner, which will not interact with or alter the analyses.
3. Ensuring that results generated by these procedures are reproducible; therefore, the sampling scheme should incorporate co-located samples (duplicates).

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4. Preventing cross-contamination. Sampling should proceed from least to most contaminated wells, if known. Field equipment blanks should be incorporated for all sampling and purging equipment, and decontamination of the equipment is therefore required.
5. Properly preserving, packaging, and shipping samples.

All field quality control samples must be prepared the same as regular investigation samples with regard to sample volume, containers, and preservation. The chain of custody procedures for the QC samples will be identical to the field ground water samples. The following are quality control samples which must be collected during the sampling event:

Sample Type	Frequency
! Field duplicates	1 per 20 samples
! Matrix spike	1 per 20 samples
! Matrix spike duplicate	1 per 20 samples
! Equipment blank	Per Regional requirements or policy
! Trip blank (VOCs)	1 per sample cooler
! Temperature blank	1 per sample cooler

HEALTH AND SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

Depending on the site-specific contaminants, various protective programs must be implemented prior to sampling the first well. The site Health and Safety Plan should be reviewed with specific emphasis placed on the protection program planned for the sampling tasks. Standard safe operating practices should be followed, such as minimizing contact with potential contaminants in both the liquid and vapor phase through the use of appropriate personal protective equipment.

Depending on the type of contaminants expected or determined in previous sampling efforts, the following safe work practices will be employed:

Particulate or metals contaminants

1. Avoid skin contact with, and incidental ingestion of, purge water.
2. Use protective gloves and splash protection.

Volatile organic contaminants

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1. Avoid breathing constituents venting from well.
2. Pre-survey the well head space with an appropriate device as specified in the Site Health and Safety Plan.
3. If monitoring results indicate elevated organic constituents, sampling activities may be conducted in level C protection. At a minimum, skin protection will be afforded by disposable protective clothing, such as Tyvek®.

General, common practices should include avoiding skin contact with water from preserved sample bottles, as this water will have pH less than 2 or greater than 10. Also, when filling pre-acidified VOA bottles, hydrochloric acid fumes may be released and should not be inhaled.

POST-SAMPLING ACTIVITIES

Several activities need to be completed and documented once ground-water sampling has been completed. These activities include, but are not limited to:

1. Ensure that all field equipment has been decontaminated and returned to proper storage location. Once the individual field equipment has been decontaminated, tag it with date of cleaning, site name, and name of individual responsible.
2. All sample paperwork should be processed, including copies provided to the Regional Laboratory, Sample Management Office, or other appropriate sample handling and tracking facility.
3. All field data should be complied for site records.
4. All analytical data when processed by the analytical laboratory, should be verified against field sheets to ensure all data has been returned to sampler.

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SAMPLING CHECKLIST

Well Identification: _____

Map of Site Included: Y or N
Wells Clearly Identified w/ Roads: Y or N
Well Construction Diagram Attached: Y or N

Well Construction:

Diameter of Borehole: _____ Diameter of Casing: _____
Casing Material: _____ Screen Material: _____

Screen Length: _____ Total Depth: _____

Approximate Depth to Water: _____
Maximum Well Development Pumping Rate: _____
Date of Last Well Development: _____

Previous Sampling Information:

Was the Well Sampled Previously: Y or N
(If Sampled, Fill Out Table Below)

Table of Previous Sampling Information				
Parameter	Previously Sampled	Number of Times Sampled	Maximum Concentration	Notes (include previous purge rates)

Ground-Water Sampling Log

Site Name: **Well #:** **Date:**

Well Depth(Ft-BTOC[1]**):** **Screen Interval** (Ft):

Well Dia.: **Casing Material:** **Sampling Device:**

Pump placement(Ft from TOC[2]):

Measuring Point: **Water level (static)**(Ft):

Water level (pumping)(Ft): **Pump rate**(Liter/min):

Sampling Personnel:

Other info: (such as sample numbers, weather conditions and field notes)

Water Quality Indicator Parameters

Time	Pumping rates (L/min)	Water level (ft)	DO (mg/l)	ORP (mv)	Turb. (NTU)	SEC[3] (FS/cm)	pH	Temp. (C^0)	Volume pumped (L)

Type of Sample collected:

1-casing volume was:

Total volume purged prior to sample collection:

Stabilization Criteria

DO	±	0.3 mg/l
Turb.	±	10%
SEC	±	3%
ORP	±	10 mv
pH	±	0.1 unit

[1]BTOC-Below Top of Casing
[2]TOC-Top of Casing
[3]Specific electrical conductance

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