

Water Quality Testing

FACT SHEET #21

TESTING

Prior to performers and crew entering any body of water, water quality testing should be done by a certified laboratory or environmental consulting company. The water quality should meet the [Guidelines for Canadian Recreational Water Quality](#) or appropriate controls should be planned to mitigate exposures. Water sampling results and acceptable water quality criteria must be made available to the JOHSC upon request.

- Consultation with the laboratory or environmental consulting company should happen as early as possible to determine appropriate testing and protocols.
- Testing should be conducted as close to the time and point of entry as possible, typically at least 48-hours prior to the commencement of production activities but always with enough time for the results to be reported back.

- At a minimum, to determine bacterial levels in fresh water, Escherichia coli (E. coli) and enterococci testing should be completed. Additional testing may be required as necessary.
- A possible alternative to independent testing is utilizing pre-existing information from a government or Non-Governmental Organization that provides current quality results.
- A well-maintained swimming pool, hot tub or tank, should not require bacterial testing to be conducted. However, pH and/or chlorine levels should be tested with a conventional pool testing kit and adjusted as necessary.
- Purpose-built water tanks for filming should be tested and maintained to ensure appropriate water quality standards are met. If not already being done, chlorine and pH levels should be tested.

CONSTRAINTS OF TESTING

When water quality testing is conducted, the results of the test will be based on the conditions at the time of the testing, which can change over time. Some of these factors include:

- Heavy rains
- Fast-moving bodies of water
- Potential hazards from the surrounding environment
 - Examples can include nearby farms, factories, or bird nests
 - Pre-existing environmental impacts (e.g. lead)
- Proximity to marinas

If elements in the environment near the body of water could lead to contamination (manmade or natural), include these in the sampling plan and request that these parameters are included in the analysis and test results.



INTERPRETING WATER QUALITY TEST RESULTS

Production should consult a Safety Professional (e.g., a Certified Industrial Hygienist, Certified Safety Professional, laboratory, environmental consulting company, or Studio Safety Representative) to determine whether a body of water is safe relative to lab test results.

POOR WATER QUALITY

If the production must use the location where water quality results are poor, the production should implement the following guidelines:

- Provide full body protection, in the form of dry suits and body orifice closures (e.g., wax earplugs, nose plugs) to anyone who will be, or could be, **fully submerged**.
- Provide appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (e.g., dry suits, waterproof clothing such as waders, gloves, and footwear) for those who may be **partially submerged**.
- Provide a readily accessible method of post-submersion cleaning (e.g., freshwater portable showers, hoses with or without sprayers and/or other portable/fixed freshwater supply with soap and water).
- Any open sores or wounds should be fully protected from water intrusion.
- All equipment that makes contact with the water shall be properly cleaned after use.
- Do not allow any worker to eat, drink, or smoke, etc. until they have completely decontaminated post-water exposure.
- Request that performers and crew monitor their health and report any signs or symptoms of waterborne illness to the production, first aid attendant, or onsite medic.

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