Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality Protocols for PFAS Sampling Standard Operating Procedures

Soil and Sediment Sampling SOP

July 2025



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DEQ PFAS Sampling Quick Reference Field Guide

1.0 General

The objective of this protocol is to give general guidelines for the collection of soil samples for PFAS analysis. Multiple soil samples may need to be collected from the sampling site for composite, mix, or homogenized samples. Representative upgradient and downgradient PFAS samples should be collected before sampling the site to determine background PFAS concentrations. This SOP is based on DEQ's research and USEPA Method 1633A. The PFAS General Sampling Guidance should be referred to for what to include in a QAPP for PFAS sampling, information on cross-contamination, additional information on field clothing, and many other details. References for this SOP and the other associated PFAS SOPs can be found in the PFAS General Sampling Guidance document.

2.0 Field Clothing and PPE

Field clothing and other personal protective equipment (PPE) typically consist of PFAS-containing materials, especially those advertised as water-resistant, water repellent, or stain-resistant. Refer to Tables 1-7 for general guidance regarding field clothing and PPE.

Sunscreen and biological protection, cosmetics, and skincare also require screening, and recommendations are provided in Tables 8-12. DEQ does not recommend the use of fragrances (e.g., perfumes, colognes) during PFAS sampling, because they can contain PFAS.

While PFAS-containing apparel and PPE should be avoided, the safety of samplers should never be compromised. Any deviation from DEQ's guidance should be recorded in the field notes.

3.0 Equipment

All equipment used during sample collection should be assessed for the presence of PFAS to eliminate or reduce the probability of cross-contamination. Refer to Table 14 for details on sampling containers that are and are not allowed. For soil sampling high-density polyethylene (HDPE) with HDPE or polypropylene linerless caps must be used for sample collection. The standard equipment used in this process includes stainless-steel spoons and bowls, steel hand augers or shovels without any coatings, and direct push samplers with liners that are PFAS-free (such as acetate liners). Refer to Table 15 for a list of common sampling materials which are allowed or prohibited. Food packaging can contain PFAS, so food packaging and products must be kept in a designated eating/drinking area as noted in Table 13.

4.0 Sampling Techniques & Collection Methods

The following section provides guidance for soil sample collection for PFAS analysis. DEQ approves multiple soil sampling techniques. The selected sampling technique may vary depending on what is most suitable for the sampling entity, selected laboratory, site characterization, and release type. Soil sampling depth intervals should be considered prior to a sampling event, as PFAS concentrations are influenced by downward leaching

during precipitation or irrigation events. Research indicates concentrations of PFAS are generally higher for soil samples collected just above the water table (capillary zone) due to air-water interfaces, than at other soil sampling intervals. The desired depth of sampling will determine which of the following sampling techniques are appropriate. These sampling techniques should be used in conjunction with the general guidance for soil sampling based on DEQ's research and USEPA Method 1633A. Sample preparations should be outlined in a site-specific sampling plan, such as a Sampling Analysis Plan (SAP).

The sampling techniques outlined below are operating procedures for soil collection and sampling based on USEPA Method 1633A, USEPA Region 4 Laboratory Services and Applied Science Division (LSASDPROC-300-R4), and DEQ's research.

4.1 Surface Sampling

- If vegetative turf, gravel, or concrete are present at or near the surface sampling site, these should be removed using a pre-cleaned PFAS-free trowel or shovel before sampling. The vegetative turf should be set aside to be replaced at the conclusion of the sampling.
- Surface soil samples (typically 0 to 24 inches below the surface) should be collected using a pre-cleaned PFAS-free stainless-steel spoon. The depth of the measurement begins at the top of the soil horizon, immediately below the removed materials.
- Sample containers must remain sealed until the point of sample collection. The sampling container cap should never be placed on any surfaces unless they are PFAS-free. The sampling container cap must never be placed directly on the ground.

4.2 Subsurface Sampling – Hand Augers and Shovels

- For shallow subsurface soil samples (typically below 24 inches below the surface), a pre-cleaned PFAS-free hand auger or shovel may be used to dig a hole and collect the sample. When the desired subsurface depth is reached, a pre-cleaned hand auger bucket or shovel shall replace the one used to reach the desired sampling depth to obtain the actual sample.
- When power augers are used to advance the borehole to the desired depth for sampling, care should be taken to ensure that exhaust fumes, gasoline, or oil will not contaminate the borehole or area in the immediate vicinity.
- The auger bucket could scrape the sides of the auger hole; therefore, it is recommended the top several inches of soil in the auger bucket be discarded before placing the bucket contents into a stainless-steel or other PFAS-free bowl for mixing. The soil should be deposited directly into a stainless-steel bowl for mixing, and the material should be mixed thoroughly by rolling the material

- into the middle of the bowl until it is homogenized. At this point, the sample in the stainless-steel bowl can be placed into the laboratory-provided container(s).
- Sample containers must remain sealed until the point of sample collection. The sampling container cap should never be placed on any surfaces unless they are PFAS-free. The sampling container cap must never be placed directly on the ground.

4.3 Subsurface – Direct Push

- The depth of the measurement for the sample begins at the top of the soil horizon, immediately below the removed materials.
- If gravel or concrete is present at or near the surface sampling site, these should be removed prior to sampling. The turfgrass is typically not removed before sampling when using direct push devices.
- Direct push sampling methods are utilized to collect shallow and deep subsurface soil samples that involve collecting and retrieving a core soil sample within a thin-walled liner.
- Coring mechanisms should consist of a stainless-steel core barrel with a clear plastic liner (use an acetate or another PFAS-free liner) into which the soil core will enter. If a core sampler includes an HDPE sleeve inserted in the core barrel to retain the sample, the sampler must ensure that materials that come in contact with the sampled media do not contain water-resistant coatings that contain PFAS.
- Once the core barrel is retrieved at the surface, this liner should be removed, placed on the cutting board, and opened using a liner cutting device. The soil sample should then be visually inspected with observations recorded in the site field book. The core should be cut open to reveal a "clean" face for sampling. This process avoids the possibility of any cross-contamination that may have been introduced as the soil core entered the liner.
- Sample containers must remain sealed until the point of sample collection. The sampling container cap should never be placed on any surfaces unless they are PFAS-free. The sampling container cap must never be placed directly on the ground.

The general sampling guidelines below are presented to supplement and further clarify the collection methods listed above.

4.4 General Soil Sampling Guidelines

- Studies have shown there is a loss of PFAS due to adsorption to surfaces; as a result, samples should be minimally handled and directly placed in the sample container as soon as possible.
- To minimize PFAS cross-contamination, grab samples are preferable. If chosen to composite, mix or homogenize samples, it is recommended that this be done at the laboratory to provide a representative subsample to be analyzed. At this time, the State Environmental Laboratory is unable to perform homogenization of samples. When the sampling technician conducts homogenization in the field, USEPA recommends that additional grab samples be provided to determine the variability and impacts on the PFAS concentrations of the mixed samples.
- To minimize PFAS cross-contamination, DEQ recommends the trace level sampling technique which involves two field personnel to collect the samples. When the field investigator is ready to fill the sample container, a designated sampler will apply new gloves, while the field investigator, also with new gloves, will open the sample container packaging. The designated sampler removes the sample container(s) from the packaging or Whirl-Pak® while keeping it closed until ready to fill, at which time the designated sampler will remove the cap and hold the container until an ample sample is obtained. The field investigator fills the sample container. The designated sampler holding the sample container should touch nothing else during the collection process. The field investigator will operate the PFAS-free sampling equipment and assist with the packaging and labeling of the sample container.
- Solid samples should be collected in laboratory-provided containers that are wide-mouthed, hold approximately 500 milliliters (mL), made of HDPE, with linerless polypropylene or HDPE caps. The container should be filled three-quarters (3/4) full.
- Solid samples must be maintained between +4°C and 2°C, protected from light in the HDPE containers from the time the samples are collected until delivery to the laboratory.

If further information regarding each sampling technique is desired before sampling, please reference the respective USEPA method documents mentioned.

5.0 Decontamination

Refer to Table 17 for guidance on decontamination methods and materials which are allowed or prohibited while sampling. The following general decontamination principles for PFAS sampling should be followed:

- Sampling equipment must be decontaminated after sampling at each location or at the end of the workday.
- Wash hands with PFAS-free water and put on new nitrile gloves before decontamination.
- Decontaminate equipment with a triple rinse of verified PFAS-free water and remove particulates with a polyethylene or PVC brush.
- PFAS-free detergents such as Alconox®, Liquinox®, Luminox®, or Citranox® may be used.
- Dry equipment with a cotton cloth, untreated paper towels, or place decontaminated equipment on a PFAS-free surface to air-dry.
- If decontamination of the drill rig equipment consists of steam washing with PFASfree water, care should be taken to contain the steam and water. PFAS may aerosolize during decontamination procedures and deposit on the site surface, creating a contamination risk.

6.0 Quality Assurance / Quality Control

DEQ recommends following the Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) Guidelines outlined in Section 5.0 of the General PFAS Sampling document to ensure project-specific Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP), Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), and Sampling Analysis Plan (SAP) consistency between sampling events. Additionally, the following guidelines should be followed for soil-specific sampling events.

- Collect a rinsate/equipment blank at the rate of 1 per day per sampling team to ensure the sampling has not introduced PFAS cross-contamination to the sampling results. This process should be conducted on each piece of equipment that is nondedicated. (Required)
- Laboratory sources of water used for equipment decontamination and blank sample collection should be certified PFAS-free or addressed for background concentrations of PFAS. (Required)
- Collect field quality control samples such as duplicates at the rate of 1 per 10 samples, trip blanks at the rate of 1 per cooler per sampling team, and field blanks at the rate of 1 per day per sampling team to assist in evaluating soil sampling and handling activities at the investigation site. (Required)
- If possible, a control sample/background sample should be collected from an area not affected by the possible contaminants of concern and submitted with the other samples. The soil sample should be collected as close to the sampled area and from the same soil type to document that low-level contaminants were not introduced by the sampling tools. (Required)

7.0 Documentation

Keep a sampling log during the sampling event and record the following:

- Sample point location
- Date and time of sample collection
- Weather conditions
- Owner's Contact Information (if applicable)
- Sample borehole
- Depth of sample
- Sampling equipment
- Duplicate sample(s)
- Visual description of samples
- Use of any unapproved PPE
 Other sampling specific (applicable) observations

Ensure documentation materials are PFAS-free; refer to Table 16. Pre-printed labels for sample containers are preferred.

8.0 Shipment

The following is recommended for sample shipment. Information is also provided in Table 18.

- Use regular ice, double-bagged, in place of chemical (blue) ice and maintain the temperature between +4°C and -2°C in a cooler.
- Check the cooler periodically to ensure samples are well iced and at the proper temperature.
- The cooler should be taped closed with a custody seal.
- Double bag Chain of Custody and other forms and tape to the inside of the cooler lid
- Ship within 48 hours or per the holding time determined by the laboratory or the selected laboratory analysis method.

DEQ PFAS Sampling Quick Reference Field Guide

Table 1: Clothing ¹		
Allowed	Not Allowed	Needs Additional Research
Well laundered clothing (recommended six times prior to sampling)	New/unwashed clothing Clothing applied/washed with fabric	Tyvek® suits, clothing that contains Tyvek®, or coated Tyvek®
• 100% cotton (preferred)	softeners, fabric protectors including	
Synthetic fabrics ²	ultraviolet (UV) protection, water, dirt or stain-resistant chemicals, or insect-	
Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC) ²	resistant chemicals	
Polyurethane	Clothing containing Tyvek®	
Uncoated Tyvek® clothing	Flame resistant (FR) clothing	
Wax-coated fabrics	Clothing made of Gore-Tex ³ (except ePE	
Rubber/Neoprene	line of products) or other known PFAS containing materials.	
• Expanded polyethylene (ePE) Gore-Tex ³	-	

¹Clothing should be kept dust and fiber free.

³ Gore-Tex generally contains PFAS, but they do have a PFAS-free line of products containing ePE (expanded polyethylene).

Table 2: Boots		
Allowed	Not Allowed	Needs Additional Research
Polyurethane boots	Gore-Tex® boots	
 PVC boots PFAS-free boot covers¹ 	Boots made from water-resistant synthetics	

¹Samplers must wash their hands with PFAS-free soap and water after putting on boot covers. Boot covers may only be removed in the staging area and after the sampling activities have been completed.

Table 3: Gloves		
Allowed	Not Allowed	Needs Additional Research
Powderless nitrile gloves ¹	Gore-Tex gloves	Latex gloves
	matoriale	 Water and dirt-resistant leather gloves Any special gloves required by a Health and Safety Plan (HASP).

¹Samplers must wash their hands with PFAS-free soap and water before putting on any gloves.

Table 4: PPE ¹		
Allowed	Not Allowed	Needs Additional Research
Hard hats made of HDPE	Waders made of Gore-Tex or other	Hard hats or safety glasses not made of
Hard hat covers/liners (i.e. Head Gaiters) made of cotton or other natural fabric	known PFAS containing materials	HDPE
Safety glasses made of HDPE		
Life jackets made of polyethylene foam and nylon shell fabric		
Waders made of Neoprene or other PFAS-free material		

¹PPE should be kept dust and fiber free.

²Some brands of PVC and synthetic clothing contain PFAS. Check clothing makers' websites to confirm that clothing is PFAS-free.

Table 5: Suggested Field Clothing and PPE Brand and Product Names
Men's L.L.Bean® Upcountry Waxed-Cotton Down Jacket
Women's L.L.Bean® Upcountry Waxed-Cotton Down Vest
Adults' L.L. Bean® Wool-Lined Waxed-Cotton Fowler's Cap
Men's L.L.Bean® Upcountry Waxed-Cotton Down Vest
ALPKIT Jura Mountain Smock Men's Jacket
ALPKIT Balance Women's Jacket
Maier Sports® FOIDIT M Outdoor Men's Pants
Men's L.L. Bean® Waxed-Canvas Maine Hunting Shoes
Women's L.L. Bean® Signature Waxed-Canvas Maine Hunting Shoes
Adults' L.L. Bean® Waxed-Cotton Chopper Mittens

Note: Perfluorochemicals (PFC) was the widely used designation for PFAS. While PFAS is currently the accepted nomenclature, some brands and research articles still use the term PFC.

Table 6: Brand Names Utilizing DownTek™ PFC-Free Water Repellent Down		
ALPKIT LTD®	• L.L. Bean®	
Big Agnes®	Kathmandu®	
• Cotopaxi™	Maier Sports®	
DynaFit®	• Patagonia [®]	
• Fjallraven™	• Salewa®	
 Gordini™ 	• Sync®	
• Jottnar [™]	• Zajo®	

Table 7: Prohibited Water-Resistant Field Clothing and PPE Brand and Product Names		
Ultra Release Teflon®	Release Teflon®	
Repel Teflon® Fabric Protector	High-Performance Release Teflon®	
High-Performance Repel Teflon® Fabric Protector	Advanced Dual Action Teflon® Fabric Protector	
NK Guard® S Series	GreenShield®	
Tri-Effects Teflon® Fabric Protector	Lurotex Protector RL ECO®	
Oleophobol CP®	Repellan KFC®	
Rucostar® EEE6	• Unidyne™	
Bionic Finish®	• RUCO-GUARD®	
• RUCOSTAR®	• RUCO-COAT®	
• RUCO-PROTECT®	• RUCOTEC®	
• RUCO®	• Resist Spills™	
• Resists Spills and Releases Stains™	• Scotchgard™ Fabric Protector	
• GoreTex® ¹		

	Table 8: Sun Protection ¹	
Allowed	Not Allowed	Needs Additional Research
Approved Sunscreens (See Table 10) ¹	No unauthorized sunscreen	Baby sunscreens that are "free" or "natural."

¹Approved sunscreens must not be applied near the sample collection area. Hands must be well washed with PFAS-free soap and water after application or handling of these products, and afterwards; an uncontaminated clean/new pair of powderless nitrile gloves should be worn.

Big Agnes® Men's Zetto Jacket

Table 9: Insect Protection ¹		
Allowed	Not Allowed	Needs Additional Research
OFF® Deep Woods	No unauthorized insect protection	
Sawyer® Permethrin	·	

¹Approved insect repellents must not be applied near the sample collection area. Hands must be well washed with PFAS-free soap and water after application or handling of these products, and afterwards; an uncontaminated clean/new pair of powderless nitrile gloves should be worn.

Table 10: Allowed/Approved Sunscreens Banana Boat® Sport Performance Coolzone Broad Spectrum SPF 30 Banana Boat® Sport Performance Sunscreen Lotion Broad Spectrum SPF 30 Banana Boat® Sport Performance Sunscreen Stick SPF 50 Coppertone® Sunscreen Lotion Ultra Guard Broad Spectrum SPF 50 Coppertone® Sport High-Performance AccuSpray Sunscreen SPF 30 Coppertone® Sunscreen Stick Kids SPF 55 L'Oréal® Silky Sheer Face Lotion SPF 50+ Meijer® Sunscreen Lotion Broad Spectrum SPF 30 Meijer® Wet Skin Kids Sunscreen Continuous Spray Broad Spectrum SPF 70 Neutrogena® Beach Defense Water+Sun Barrier Lotion SPF 70

¹Baby sunscreens that are "free" or "natural" are not guaranteed PFAS-free and need additional research.

Table 11: Approved Personal Care Products (Cosmetics and Skincare) ¹		
Credo (all products)		
Sephora (Clean at Sephora Products)		
Annmarie Skin Care (all products)		
California Baby (all products)		
Crunchi (all products)		
Fluency Beauty (all products)		
H&M (all store brand products)		
Hydropeptide (all products)		
Mi Coco es su Coco (all products)		
Otter Wax (all body and skincare products)		
Reed + Gwen (all personal care products)		
Whole Foods Market (all products)		
X'Factor Skincare By Pharmacists (all products)		
*Course Cross Coiones Policy Institute 2025		

^{*}Source: Green Science Policy Institute, 2025

¹If Personal Care Products are used, the sampler must apply these products away from the staging area, sampling bottles, and equipment, and hands shall be thoroughly washed with PFAS-free soap and water after use and before a sampling event. The sampler must also put on a fresh pair of powderless nitrile gloves before sampling.

Neurogena © Beach Before Water Out Barrier Edition of 1 70

Neutrogena® Beach Defense Water+Sun Barrier Spray Broad Spectrum SPF 30

Neutrogena® Pure & Free Baby Sunscreen Broad Spectrum SPF 60+

Neutrogena® UltraSheer Dry-Touch Sunscreen Broad Spectrum SPF 30

Table 12: Approved Personal Care Products (Floss) ¹		
Coco Floss (all products)	Radius Floss (All Products)	
Dental Lace (all products)	Rite-Aid (Premium Waxed Mint)	
Dr. Tung's (Smart Floss and Activated Charcoal Floss)	Tom's of Maine (Antiplaque Spearmint)	
Desert Essence (tea tree oil dental tape)	Hello Products (all floss)	
Johnson & Johnson Listerine Cool Mint Reach Mint Waxed Reach Waxed Unflavored Reach Clean Paste Icy Mint Woven	Oral-B Satin Floss Mint	

^{*}Source: Green Science Policy Institute, 2025

¹If Personal Care Products are used, the sampler must apply these products away from the staging area, sampling bottles, and equipment, and hands shall be thoroughly washed with PFAS-free soap and water after use and before a sampling event. The sampler must also put on a fresh pair of powderless nitrile gloves before sampling.

Table 13: Food Containers ¹		
Allowed	Not Allowed	Needs Additional Research
Food packaging and products in a designated eating area set up for food and beverage consumption	Food packaging and products in the staging or sampling areas	Bringing foods rewrapped in PFAS-free materials

¹After coming into contact with food packaging, samplers must wash their hands with PFAS-free soap and water and put on a fresh pair of powderless nitrile gloves at the staging area before returning to the sampling area.

Table 14: Sampling Containers ²		
Allowed	Not Allowed	Needs Additional Research
HDPE also known as polyethylene high- density (PEHD)	bottles or caps (i.e.Teflon® and	Glass bottles and containers ¹
Polypropylene	Hostaflon®)	
Stainless Steel	LDPE containers that will contact the sample media	
Unlined bottle caps		
Low-denisity polyethylene (LDPE) resealable bags (Ziplock) that will not come in contact with the sample media	 Aluminum foil is not to be used due to the possibility of it being coated with PFAS. Utilize an alternative sample preparation and storage material. 	

Glass bottles or containers may be used if they are known to be PFAS-free; however, PFAS have been found to adsorb to glass, especially when the sample is in contact with the glass for an extended period of time (e.g., stored in a glass container). If the sample comes into direct contact with the glass for a short period of time (e.g., using a glass container to collect the sample, then transferring the sample to a non-glass sample bottle), the adsorption is minimal. Generally, glass bottles or containers should not be used for PFAS samples.

²Sampling containers must remain sealed until point of sample collection. The sampling container cap should never be placed on any surface unless it is PFAS-free. The sampling container cap must never be placed directly on the ground.

Table 15: Sampling Equipment		
Allowed	Not Allowed	Needs Additional Research
HDPE (also PEHD)	Polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE)	Glass equipment
Polypropylene	Polyvinylidene fluoride (PVDF)	
Stainless Steel	Polychlorotrifluoroethylene (PCTFE)	
Acetate	Ethylene-tetrafluoroethylene (ETFE)	
• Silicone	 Low-density polyethylene (LDPE) which will contact the sample media 	
	Fluorinated ethylene-propylene (FEP)	

Table 16: Field Materials ¹		
Allowed	Not Allowed	Needs Additional Research
Aluminum, polypropylene, or Masonite field clipboards	Clipboards coated with PFAS-containing materials	Plastic clipboards, binders, or spiral hardcover notebooks
Rite in the Rain® notebooks	Notebooks made with PFAS treated	Waterproof field books
Loose paper (non-waterproof, non- recycled)	paper PFAS treated loose paper	All markers not listed as allowable
Ballpoint pens and pencils	Post-It® Notes or other adhesive paper	
Interface Meters (a.k.a. oil and water	products	
interface probes, depth to water gauges)	Sharpie® markers	
that are made with PFAS-free materials	Coated materials, including paper towels	
	 Aluminum foil is not to be used due to the possibility of it being coated with PFAS. Utilize an alternative sample preparation and storage material. 	
	Interface Meters (a.k.a. oil and water interface probes, depth to water gauges) that are made with PFAS-containing materials	

¹Field vehicles may have seats treated with stain-resistant products and could represent a source of cross-contamination. If possible, cover treated vehicle seats with a well-laundered cotton blanket or sheet. Never handle sample containers on the vehicle seats. Always change gloves after exiting a field vehicle.

Table 17: Decontamination Procedures ¹		
Allowed	Not Allowed	Needs Additional Research
Alconox®, Liquinox®, Luminox®, or Citranox®	Decon 90® PFAS treated paper towels	• Municipal water ¹
• Triple rinse with PFAS-free water ¹	Reusing non-dedicated equipment	
Cotton cloth or untreated paper towels	without decontaminating	
Polyethylene or PVC brush to remove particulates		

¹Decontamination procedures should include decontaminating equipment with an allowed detergent and triple rinsing with PFAS-free water for equipment such as dippers, balers, spades, etc. Laboratory supplied PFAS-free deionized water is preferred for cleaning and decontamination. However, commercially available deionized water may be used for cleaning and decontamination if the water is verified to be PFAS-free. Municipal drinking water may be used for cleaning or decontamination if the water is known to be PFAS-free. Non-dedicated sampling equipment must be cleaned and decontaminated before each use.

Table 18: Sample Shipment		
Allowed/Required	Not Allowed	Needs Additional Research
Maintaining sample temperature between +4°C and -2°C Double-bagging of samples and ice.	 Aluminum foil is not to be used due to the possibility of it being coated with PFAS. Utilize an alternative sample preparation and storage material. Chemical (blue) ice packs 	Chemical (blue) ice packs that are verified PFAS free
 Chain of Custody and other forms should be single bagged in LDPE (e.g. Ziploc®) storage bags and taped to the inside of the cooler lid. 		