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## HANDLING AND SHIPPING OF SAMPLES 5.5

*By D.B. Radtke*

Samples should be packaged and shipped to the laboratory for analysis as soon as possible. Generally, the shorter the time between sample collection/processing and sample analysis, the more reliable the analytical results will be. Before shipping samples to the laboratory:

- ▶ Check that sample bottles are labeled correctly.
- ▶ Complete an Analytical Services Request (ASR) form.
- ▶ Pack samples carefully in the shipping container to prevent bottle breakage, shipping container leakage, and sample degradation. Check that the bottle caps are securely fastened.

Protocols for labeling, documenting, and packaging samples established by the receiving laboratory must be followed. **Obtain authorization from the laboratory before shipping highly contaminated or potentially hazardous samples for analysis.** A summary of procedures for shipping samples to the NWQL is outlined below. Office of Water Quality Technical Memorandum 92.06 and National Water Quality Laboratory Technical Memorandum 95.04 give detailed instructions on shipping procedures.

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