

# Laboratory Resources for the Water Sector to Support Decontamination Activities

## Background

During a contamination event at a drinking water or wastewater system, it may be necessary to analyze a surge of water samples to identify the contaminant and to support remediation. Activities that require the analysis of water samples during remediation include characterizing the extent of contamination, assessing the effectiveness of decontamination, and determining that it is safe to return the system to service. Long-term monitoring of the water system to confirm no reoccurrence of contaminants may require further analysis of water samples.

Locating laboratory resources with the appropriate analytical capabilities is an important step in any decontamination process. This fact sheet addresses how a utility can locate laboratory resources with the capability and capacity to analyze water samples for a wide array of chemical, biological, and radiological contaminants during an incident response. If intentional contamination is suspected, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) involvement is necessary. Utilities should notify the local FBI field office Weapons of Mass Destruction Coordinator, who will in turn ensure that other appropriate local, state, and federal agencies are contacted. To find the location of your FBI Field Office, refer to: [http://www.fbi.gov/contact-us/field/listing\\_by\\_state](http://www.fbi.gov/contact-us/field/listing_by_state).

## How to Identify Laboratory Resources

In response to a contamination event, utilities should coordinate with the appropriate state and local agencies. In addition, EPA's **Compendium of Environmental Testing Laboratories** ("Laboratory Compendium") can be used to identify a laboratory with appropriate analytical capabilities. The Laboratory Compendium is

an online database of approximately 400 environmental laboratories nationwide. The database contains contact information as well as details on each laboratory's specific abilities to analyze chemical, biological, and radiological contaminants. Information within the Laboratory Compendium is searchable based on multiple criteria (e.g., laboratory location, analyte).

To identify a laboratory, registered users can access the Laboratory Compendium at <http://www.epa.gov/compendium>. To become a registered user, a utility must first apply and be approved by EPA. Registration can be found at <https://cfext.epa.gov/cet/lbLABSRegister.cfm>. New users can access the Lab Compendium's **Getting Started Guide** for information on how to register.

## Accessing Laboratory Networks

During water contamination events, EPA's **Water Laboratory Alliance (WLA)** provides the Water Sector with an integrated nationwide network of laboratories. WLA member laboratories include public health, environmental, and commercial laboratories that have the ability to analyze drinking water and/or wastewater samples for chemical, biological, and radiological contaminants. This alliance of laboratories can be accessed in events with high sample analysis demand (i.e., when surge capacity is needed) or for non-routine and unregu-



lated contaminants. For information on the WLA, see <http://water.epa.gov/infrastructure/watersecurity/wla/>. The WLA is a component of EPA’s **Environmental Response Laboratory Network (ERLN)**. The ERLN provides federal, state, and local decision makers with reliable, high quality analytical data to identify chemical, biological, and radiological contaminants collected in environmental samples (i.e., water, air, soil, etc.) in support of response and cleanup activities. More than 130 ERLN/WLA member laboratories can be accessed through the Laboratory Compendium. For more information on the ERLN, visit <http://www.epa.gov/erln>.

EPA and other federal agencies support a number of laboratory networks that can be accessed to provide additional laboratory response capabilities during a contamination event (i.e., surge capacity). The ERLN is one of seven networks that constitute the Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) **Integrated Consortium of Laboratory Networks (ICLN)** (Figure 1). The ICLN is a system of federal laboratory networks that allows member networks the opportunity to access resources from other consortium member laboratories. The ICLN provides a venue for the efficient coordination of analytical laboratory services for events through inter-network strategic and operational planning, communication, and coordination. More information on the ICLN can be found at <http://www.icln.org>.

### Coordination during a Contamination Response Effort

The Water Laboratory Alliance Response Plan (WLA-RP) (EPA 817-R-10-002, November 2010) establishes

processes and procedures for a coordinated laboratory response to water contamination events (available at [http://water.epa.gov/infrastructure/watersecurity/wla/upload/WLAResponsPlan\\_November2010.pdf](http://water.epa.gov/infrastructure/watersecurity/wla/upload/WLAResponsPlan_November2010.pdf)). Specifically, the WLA-RP addresses response to incidents that may require additional analytical support than a typical utility, state, or federal laboratory alone can provide. In particular, it is recommended that utilities reference the WLA-RP *Appendix C Help Sheet for Requesting Analytical Support during an Emergency Response*, to ensure that all necessary information is communicated between the utility and laboratory when requesting analytical support.

As an incident progresses, the type of laboratory capabilities required to meet a utility’s analytical needs may change. During the initial phases of a response, laboratories capable of conducting rapid screening may be needed to quickly identify the contaminant. During the later stages of a response, it may be necessary to access laboratories that are able to conduct confirmatory analyses to assess whether it is safe to return a system to service. Since multiple laboratories may be needed throughout the response process, a utility may need input from their state laboratory to ensure appropriate methods and resources are utilized. Utilities should also consult with local or state jurisdictions for any primacy agency requirements, processes or procedures.

Figure 2 describes the process of identifying and utilizing laboratory resources during the different stages of response to a water contamination event including key decision points, contacts, and resources. Additional information on key contacts and resources is provided in Tables 1 and 2.

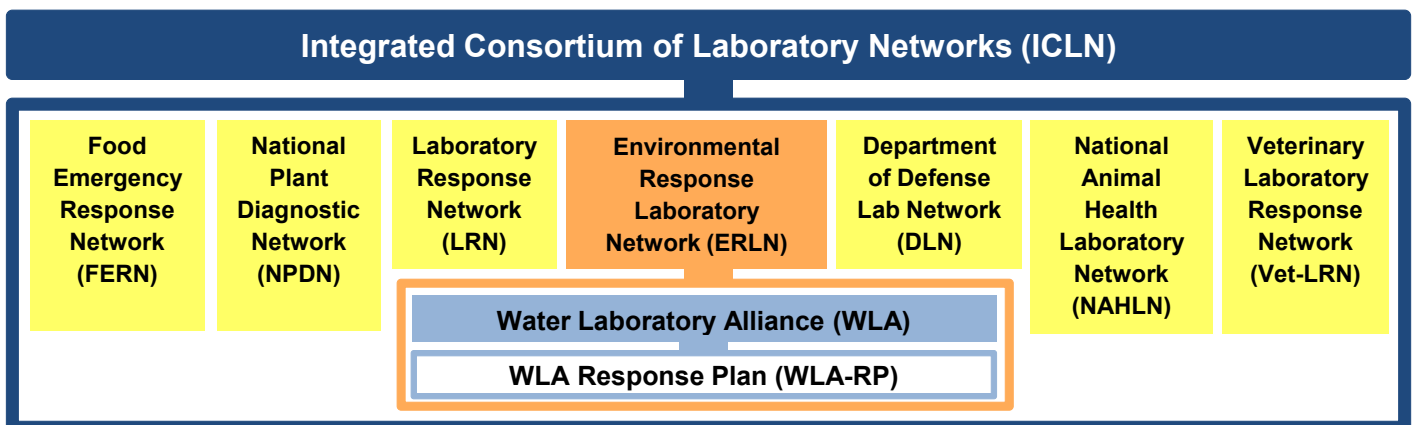


Figure 1. Integrated Consortium of Laboratory Networks

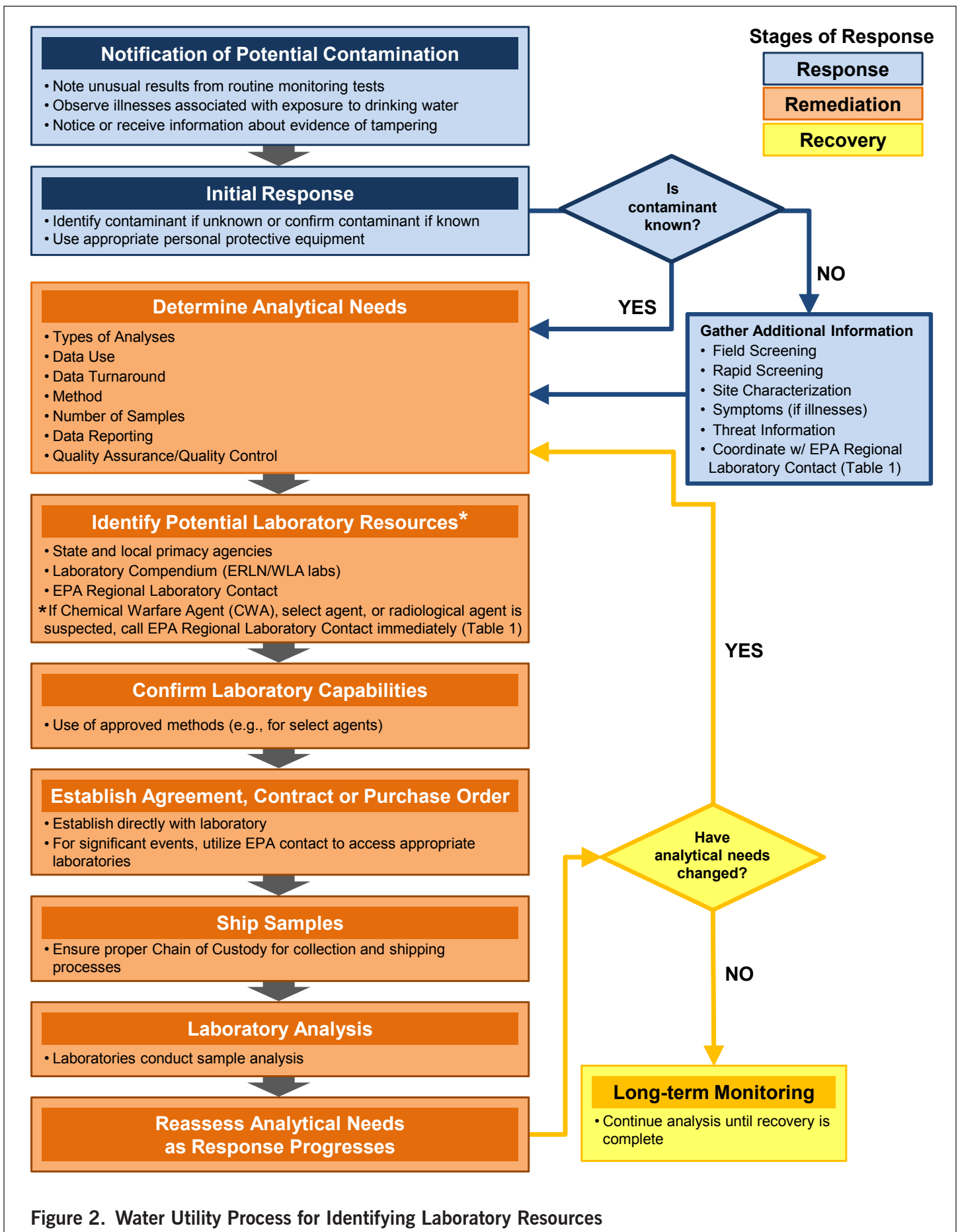


Figure 2. Water Utility Process for Identifying Laboratory Resources

## Key Points of Contact

As noted previously, utilities should contact their state or local primacy agency regarding availability of laboratory resources. In the event that a utility is unable to identify laboratory capabilities or if additional support is needed (e.g., to test for a select agent/chemical warfare agent or to determine an unknown contaminant), they may communicate with their EPA Regional Laboratory Contact. Please see Table 1 for contact information. Additional EPA resources are listed in Table 2.



**Table 1. EPA Regional Laboratory Contacts**

EPA REGION	CONTACT INFORMATION
Region 1 (ME, VT, NH, MA, CT, RI)	<b>Ernest Waterman</b> (waterman.ernest@epa.gov)   (617) 918-8632
Region 2 (NY, NJ, PR, VI)	<b>John Bourbon</b> (bourbon.john@epa.gov)   (732) 321-6706
Region 3 (PA, DE, MD, VA, WV, DC)	<b>Cindy Caporale</b> (caporale.cynthia@epa.gov)   (410) 305-2732
Region 4 (NC, SC, GA, FL, AL, MS, TN, KY)	<b>Gary Bennett</b> (bennett.gary@epa.gov)   (706) 355-8551
Region 5 (OH, MI, IN, IL, WI, MN)	<b>Dennis Wesolowski</b> (wesolowski.dennis@epa.gov)   (312) 353-9084
Region 6 (AR, LA, TX, OK, NM)	<b>David Neleigh</b> (neleigh.david@epa.gov)   (281) 983-2209
Region 7 (IA, MO, NE, KS)	<b>Michael F. Davis</b> (davis.michael@epa.gov)   (913) 551-5042
Region 8 (ND, SD, MT, WY, CO, UT)	<b>Mark Burkhardt</b> (burkhardt.mark@epa.gov)   (303) 312-7799
Region 9 (AZ, NV, CA, HI)	<b>Brenda Bettencourt</b> (bettencourt.brenda@epa.gov)   (510) 412-2311
Region 10 (ID, WA, OR, AK)	<b>Barry Pepich</b> (pepich.barry@epa.gov)   (360) 871-8701

**Table 2. Additional Contacts**

EPA RESOURCE	CONTACT INFORMATION
Environmental Response Laboratory Network	<b>Schatzi Fitz-James</b> (fitz-james.schatzi@epa.gov)   (202) 564-2521
Water Laboratory Alliance	<b>Latisha Mapp</b> (mapp.latisha@epa.gov)   (202) 564-1390
WLA Email	<b>WLA@epa.gov</b>
ERLN/WLA Helpline	(703) 818-4200