
Intermountain Section AWWA Water Taste Test 2026

Rules

1. The water utility must be an AWWA member.
2. All samples submitted should be from systems that have no state or federal drinking water violations (MCL, monitoring, recordkeeping, etc.) for the last calendar year (2025).
3. Sample must be received at the Taste Test Registration desk no later than 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, September 16. Late samples will not be accepted. Samples should be at room temperature.
4. Each sample submitted must include at least 2 liters. Each sample should be clearly identified with the name of the water system and category it represents (surface water or groundwater).
5. Water systems may submit up to two samples for each category, or a total of four samples maximum.
6. The Water Taste Test awards will be announced at the Closing Luncheon.

Sample Handling Process

After the samples are turned in, they will be allowed to warm up to room temperature for the contest. Each sample will be placed in a bottle labeled by a letter A, B, etc. The identity of each sample will be kept anonymous.

Contest Judging

1. Samples will be judged on a 10-point scale from Good (1) to Best (10).
2. Scores will be tabulated, and the winner will be announced at awards luncheon.
3. Only the winning samples will be announced - samples will not be ranked, nor will scores be released.

The following will be selected:

- Best Overall

- 1st, 2nd and 3rd Place – Groundwater
- 1st, 2nd and 3rd Place – Surface water / GWUDI

The Best Overall entry will be eligible to participate in ACE27 held in San Diego in June 2027.

Recommended Sample Preparation

Glass containers are recommended, because if they are properly prepared, they impart no taste or odor to the water. It is recommended that containers be completely filled so as to eliminate air from the top of the sample, and that the samples be transported on ice.

Three different alternative bottle preparation methods are suggested for taste/odor testing:

Method #1 - Prepare sample bottles by washing bottle and cap with detergent. Rinse 10 times with hot water. Optionally rinse with HCl (1:1). Rinse with odor-free water at least three times. If there is a residual odor, repeat cleaning.

Method #2 - Without wearing rubber gloves wash flask with soapy water. Additionally, scrub outside of flask with scouring pad to remove body oils. Rinse 10 times with hot water and 3 times with odor-free water. To store glassware, add 100 to 200 mL odor-free water and cover with stopper. Before use, rinse with 100 mL of odor-free water. If there is residual odor, repeat cleaning.

Method #3 - Do not handle with rubber gloves. Before use, heat 200 mL odor-free water to boiling, pour carefully into the bottle and lightly lay stopper over flask opening, permitting water vapor to escape. Discard boiled water and let flask cool to room temperature. If there is residual odor repeat or use alternative #1.