SUMMARY OF SAMPLE ANALYSIS PROCEDURES FOR THE NUTRIENTS WORKGROUP

1. Print or view backlog of samples to be analyzed daily. For digested chemistries: check for re-digestion requests before you start. Make sure to read your email regularly during the day but at least first thing in the morning and before you leave.

2. Choose samples to analyze based on:
   - First: Expiration date
   - Second: Priority/Date required
   - Third: The weekly target number

3. a) Order samples using the Sample Reservations module in the Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS). Analysts should submit reservations by 2:00 p.m. for samples needed before 10:30 a.m. the next day. Requests submitted between 2:00 p.m. and close of business will be ready for check out after 10:30 the following day. Request samples for the time you actually need them. Check samples out of receiving room (use Custody module in LIMS). Never leave the custody room with a sample that you have not checked out.

   or

   b) If samples have been prepared, retrieve samples from the prep area. The paperwork associated with the preparation is located in the LIMS Prep Worksheet Manager module.

4. If a sample is not in your reservation and there is no indication that another analyst has taken it or the custodian could not find it, check the custody log. Then contact a custodian or supervisor. If the stockroom staff cannot locate a sample for more than two days, you must notify your supervisor. Avoid pulling samples on your own. Samples removed from a reservation that is not your own should be marked on the reservation sheet with a note and initials. When practical, reserve samples that are not reserved by somebody else already.

5. Check expiration dates of standards and reagents needed for analysis or preparation. Discard expired standards or reagents immediately and prepare new. Analysis must never be run with expired standards or reagents. Document all preparations appropriately (DEP SOPs NU-041and NU-042). If you use auto-pipettes check their labels and re-calibrate if necessary before use (DEP SOP CM-032). If you use a balance, check its calibration status before use and, if necessary, perform a calibration check. Document the daily balance calibration check in the balance logbook (DEP SOP CM-011).

6. Perform instrument maintenance, as needed, and prepare it for analysis.

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7. Make sure that samples are warmed up to room temperature before pouring them. Shake each sample bottle well before pouring. Make a note on the bench sheet if a sample appears unusual, e.g. has unusual color, odor, particulates, etc. Never dip pipets or other liquid transfer equipment directly into a sample bottle to avoid accidental contamination. Pour a small amount of sample into a clean disposable plastic cup and pipet from the cup. The only exception from this rule are the sterile plastic syringes (usually used in conjunction with disk filters). Such syringes are precleaned and individually packaged. They can be dipped directly into sample bottle if the packaging removed immediately before using.

8. Analyze samples. Check QC results while the run is going, if possible. Follow all applicable SOP instructions and if in doubt about the analysis protocol or any acceptance criteria consult your supervisor immediately. All DEP SOPs and the Bureau's Quality Manual are accessible through the DEP Intranet:
a. SOPs: https://fldeploc.dep.state.fl.us/dcs/sop/query.asp
b. Quality Manual: https://floridadep.gov/dear/florida-dep-laboratory/content/dep-laboratory-quality-assurance-manual-and-sops .

9. Print results and complete the analysis report (e.g. sample values, peaks and calibration, reagent and standard prep. sheets, bench sheet, digestion paperwork).

10. a) Check samples back into the receiving room. Do not type in sample ID's, always use the barcode scanner. The only exception is if the barcode is not readable due to a damaged label. You must have the bottle in hand when you type the sample ID.

    Or:

    b) Cap prepaired samples and if necessary change status of samples that need redigestion to W (use Prep Worksheet Manager module in LIMS).

11. Check that no samples are left in your name.
(LIMS→Laboratory→Custody→Reports→Samples Checked Out→select your name.

12. Import results into the QC Manager. Perform calculations. Upload results to LIMS.

13. Sign and place all paperwork associated with the analysis in a manila folder and turn the folder in to your supervisor.

14. Supervisor reviews results and authorizes data uploaded to LIMS.

15. References:

    15.1. DEP SOP CM-032, Calibration of Auto-pipettes and Dispensers using the Check & Track Software.

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15.2. DEP SOP NU-041, Reagent Preparation Procedure.

15.3. DEP SOP NU-042, Standard Preparation Procedure.

Appendix of Changes

08/31/2012 Revised sections 4 and 6 and added section 12 for references.

10/11/2017 Revised sections 3, 5, 9 and added sections 4 and 10.

12/10/2018 Revised sections 2, 4, and 6 for clarity. The title was modified.

12/06/2019 Inserted section 7 to add sample pouring instructions.

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