

TECTA™ Automated Microbiological Testing System Being Used Successfully at the Tampa Bay Surface Water Treatment Plant

A prototype of the TECTA™ automated microbiological testing system has received an enthusiastic welcome at the Tampa Bay Surface Water Treatment Plant, where it is being used for operational testing for *E.coli* and Total Coliform bacteria in both raw and finished water samples.



“The TECTA™ system consistently gave us the same results in 18 hours or less as the Colisure™ method gave in 24 hours during side-by-side testing.”

Pamela London-Exner,
Lab Manager, Tampa Bay SWTP

The TECTA™ system has the unique capability to continuously monitor the microbiological test throughout the incubation phase, providing early alerts of contaminated samples in as little as 2 hours, with negative sample results available after 18 hours. The Tampa Bay plant lab has been running the TECTA™ system with a combination of raw, process, and finished water samples, with sample replicates being analyzed using the Colisure™ method. Since the TECTA™ system uses the identical enzyme indicators for *E.coli* and Total Coliform bacteria as virtually all of the methods approved for drinking water testing by the US EPA, performance in side-by-side comparison studies provide consistent results.

“We found the system to be very simple to use, with none of the subjective visual interpretation required by other test methods that is a potential source of confusion”, says Pamela London-Exner, manager of the in-plant laboratory at the Tampa Bay plant. She goes on to add that one of the major advantages of the TECTA™ system over manually-incubated tests is the elimination of the critical “read window” of time required by the other test methods that typically must be interpreted after 24 hours but within no more than 28 hours after the start of incubation. *“It was very nice to not be chained to the incubator when it was time to read the samples since they are evaluated and stored by the system - allowing for more scheduling freedom in the lab.”*

The TECTA-B16™ desktop test instrument and the TECTA-CCA™ single-use test cartridge for combined *E.coli* and Total Coliforms are a powerful combination – enabling laboratory-grade microbiology to be performed on-site, closer to the point of sampling. This innovative solution provides faster results at a lower per-test cost. Extreme ease-of-use means that staff without microbiological technical training can operate the system, enabling more frequent operational testing of finished drinking water supplies, improved microbiological surveillance of distribution systems, and providing a critical laboratory backup and disaster recovery capability for water utilities.

The Tampa Bay Surface Water Treatment Plant has a production capacity of 72 million gallons per day, servicing a population of 2.4 million people in 6 Florida counties. The facility is operated under contract by Veolia Water.

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