



WATERTRAX

Automated Sample Tracking Program Ensures Durham Never Misses a Thing

WaterTrax Brings Automation and Efficiency to a Complicated Sampling Program



“We now know instantly if sampling events aren’t happening. WaterTrax has automated our sampling program for us.”

Tavis Nimmo, Technical Support Division, Regional Municipality of Durham

About Regional Municipality of Durham

The Regional Municipality of Durham is located in Southern Ontario. They have been using WaterTrax to maintain their water quality data since 2006. Durham Region is responsible for the treatment, storage and distribution of drinking water to every consumer in 18 communities in that area, operating 6 surface water supply plants, 18 remote water storage facilities, 24 groundwater wells and over 2,300 km (1,400 miles) of water mains.

The Challenge

Durham Region was using an excel spreadsheet with three tabs for tracking raw water, treated water and distribution system sampling requirements. They would print out a 3 foot by 4 foot calendar on a plotter with check boxes for each user to ensure that each sample was collected, analyzed and reviewed. Managing many water systems at multiple sites, created an obstacle

as the calendar lived in one location and they would either have to go to the site physically or try to get a hold of someone to check the calendar. This system left a lot of room for human error and was time consuming to set up and maintain. Chain of custody forms were done on a monthly basis in an excel document requiring manual inputs to change the date and update the required samples. They would send out emails manually to remind samplers when ad hoc samples were required and constantly had to undertake a labour intensive review of all of the samples to ensure that sampling points hadn’t been missed.

“Quality checking of sample results has been automated; we used to review every lab report and check every result against the parameters that we need to achieve compliance. Now WaterTrax does that for us.”

The Solution: WaterTrax

“We realized that we wanted to automate this very manual, time consuming process,” explains Tavis

Nimmo, Technical Support Division. They saw the need to automate their sample tracking program and knew that WaterTrax had a module that could help them. "We wanted to evaluate our options so we looked at some other software providers, in-house options, replacing the existing system with the lab's LIMS and consulted with WaterTrax."

Seamless & Easy Uploading of Sample Results

After evaluating all of their options and talking to users both at the lab and internally, they decided to work with WaterTrax to enhance our sampling planner module to include the ability to generate chain of custody forms and bottle labels with locations and test groups pre-populated on the forms and labels. Their lab, York Durham Regional Environmental Lab, was a big proponent in using WaterTrax as they find it seamless and easy for uploading sample results. Durham was looking to integrate their laboratory's specific chain of custody forms and labels with sample reminders and alerts for missed samples. They wanted to reconcile specific parameters so that if results from a test group that was sent to the lab weren't received, they would receive automated alerts.

Safe Guards & Time Savings

Durham gave WaterTrax a very specific vision of things they wanted and needed. "We needed a better way to track our sampling program compliance with more safe guards so that if someone is out of the office, the sampling program will continue to go on," explains Tavis. "We were also looking for a solution that would alleviate the time it took on an annual basis to set up the program and make it easier in the coming years."

The Benefits

Using the standard features of WaterTrax for sample result tracking, the Sample Planner module further allows Durham Region to set up and schedule their complete sampling program consistently and provides automated email reminders for upcoming sampling events and alerts for missed samples. The Chain of Custody forms and labels are generated based on the sample schedule and the WaterTrax Chain of Custody form and labels were customized to match the specific requirements of the Durham Region laboratory to ensure seamless integration.

After implementing the Sampling Planner module and completing the addition of Chain of Custody forms and labels, Durham has significantly reduced their worry about missing a sample, has increased ease of access to sampling requirements and eliminated the additional time it took to manually track sampling requirements.

"Quality checking of sample results has been automated; we used to review every lab report and check every result against the parameters that we need to achieve compliance. Now WaterTrax does that for us," stated Tavis. "We set it up in WaterTrax one time and it automatically generates the Chain of Custody form and labels and the entire sampling schedule is in the Sample Planner module. When we have a sample that is out of the norm, you don't have to worry about forgetting it. The sample alerts prompt you for it every week. We have found that the Chain of Custody functionality and Sample Planner have saved a lot of the Sampling Group's time and effort maintaining the sampling program by hand."

Now, Durham Region can access their sampling program from any computer that has access to the internet. They are able to log into WaterTrax and see when samples are supposed to take place, receive automated alerts if there are any issues and access all of the laboratory reports through the application. They find it a lot easier to perform quality inspections or spot checks since the sampling program has been implemented. "We now know instantly if sampling events aren't happening. WaterTrax has automated our sampling program for us." The biggest benefit that Durham has found from implementing the WaterTrax Sampling Planner with Chain of Custody forms and labels is that they have removed the human error component in remembering what was required for their sampling schedules.

Results

- Reduce the worry of missing sampling events
- Save time and eliminate manually tracking sampling requirements
- Set-up and schedule complete sampling program
- Provide automated email reminders for upcoming sampling events and alerts for missed samples
- Increase ease of access to sampling requirements
- Access to their sampling program from any computer that has access to the internet

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Book a discovery call to discuss how we can meet your water quality & wastewater compliance needs.

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