TRW Lead Committee Recommendations
Holding Times for Lead Analysis of Soil Samples

"*Can the recommended holding times be exceeded for analysis of lead in soil samples?*"

Current EPA recommendations are that holding times for metals analysis of soils should not exceed six months[1]. However, in 2005, U.S. EPA[2] evaluated sample holding time for metals analysis of soils and found that for a holding time of one year no chemically significant change in concentration occurred. This study also found that there was no significant difference between moist or dry sample handling. In addition, NIST, ASTM, as well as other certified soil standards for metals have typical life expectancies of up to 10 years without significant changes in metal concentration under a variety of storage conditions.

Based on the soil standards and the 2005 EPA study, the TRW recommends that holding times for soil lead determination may be extended up to 2 years total holding time and that refrigeration is not necessary for total soil lead (though a site-specific QAPP may specify a different holding time or storage conditions) with reasonable expectation that representative results will be obtained.

[1] http://www.epa.gov/osw/hazard/testmethods/faq/faq_tclp.htm#Htimes
[2] http://www.epa.gov/esd/cmb/research/bs_033cmb06.pdf