

Provincial Framework for Developing Provincial Air Quality Objectives

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to describe the process used by the province to develop ambient air quality objectives for BC. Air quality objectives are non-statutory limits used to assess air quality and to guide air management decisions, such as the issuance of authorizations and air quality advisories, and the development of airshed management plans. The approach listed below is based on the Ministry of Environment's operational policy used to guide Ministry staff during the development of air quality objectives.

Provincial Framework

The Provincial Framework outlines the key goals and guiding principles that are used to inform decisions related to air quality objective-setting; the general approach to develop objectives; and opportunities for stakeholder involvement.

Goals

The Ministry of Environment strives to enhance environmental protection and stewardship by monitoring air and water quality, reducing and removing wastes and toxins from the environment, and emphasizing compliance activities with respect to discharges to the environment.

Guiding Principles

- Maintaining and improving health is the primary objective

- Seek the same degree of protection for all British Columbians
- Involve interested and affected parties
- Communicate in an effective way
- Use a broad perspective
- Use a collaborative and integrated approach
- Make effective use of sound science
- Tailor the process to the issue and its context
- Clearly define roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities
- Strive to make the process transparent

Approach

The Provincial Framework lays out a three-phase approach to the development of provincial air quality objectives:

1. **Priority-setting:** The Ministry sets priorities based on several considerations, including government priorities, information on exposure and emissions, new information on health effects, and health priorities by other agencies.
2. **Risk assessment:** This is a science-based process to evaluate the potential for adverse health effects in BC resulting from exposure to a pollutant.
3. **Risk management:** This phase integrates information from the risk assessment with economic and technical factors as well as ethical, social, legal, ecological and achievability considerations to finalize recommendations for B.C.

Stakeholder Input

The Ministry maintains a list of key stakeholders representing various health and environmental agencies, academics, airshed groups, local governments and industrial stakeholder. Direct contact with key stakeholders will be made through the existing stakeholder lists and through the BCairquality.ca website. Stakeholders can request inclusion on this list by contacting the Ministry.

Periodically, key stakeholders may be asked by the Ministry for their input on priority substances for objectives development or review. Stakeholders will be notified when the Ministry initiates a process to develop or review air quality objectives, and their input will be sought on the risk assessment and evaluation of risk management options. Public input will be sought prior to finalising recommendations for new objectives.

Application

This information applies to the development of ambient air quality objectives for BC. It does not apply to the setting of emission standards.

Please note that this information is for the convenience of the reader and may change from time to time. The Ministry of Environment should be consulted for complete information.

Ministry Contact

For more information, consult our website at:
www.bcairquality.ca/regulatory/air-objectives-standards.html

or e-mail the Ministry at: BCAirQuality@gov.bc.ca.