



## ANNUAL SERVICE PLAN FOR SAFE DRINKING WATER IN BRITISH COLUMBIA – 2021/2022

The Ministry of Health ([the Ministry](#)) has overall responsibility for ensuring that quality, appropriate, cost-effective and timely health services are available for all British Columbians. This annual report, which focuses on drinking water, supports the accountabilities, mandate, and strategic direction outlined in the Ministry's service plan for 2021/2022 to 2023/2024.

The *Drinking Water Protection Act* (DWPA) and Drinking Water Protection Regulation (DWPR) constitute the primary legislation that serves to ensure safe drinking water for people in BC. The Ministry of Health administers the DWPA and DWPR. The province's five regional health authorities are the primary organizations that enforce the Act and regulation. The DWPA and DWPR set out requirements that drinking water suppliers must meet to ensure the provision of safe drinking water.

The Ministry also works in partnership with the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) to support the health and wellness of First Nations people in B.C. The Ministry works closely and collaboratively with the Drinking Water Program within the FNHA to support access to safe drinking water for First Nations communities. More information on the FNHA drinking water program can be found [on the FNHA website](#).

### **Goal 1: Improve public health protection respecting drinking water by implementing recommendations from the report of the Office of the Auditor General, *The Protection of Drinking Water: An Independent Audit*.**

In the Office of the Auditor General's (OAG) 2019 report, [The Protection of Drinking Water: An Independent Audit](#), 5 recommendations were directed to the Ministry and three to the Office of the Provincial Health Officer (OPHO). The Ministry and the OPHO accepted all recommendations and together developed an [Action Plan for Public Accounts](#) (APPA) to report to the Select Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

#### **Highlight of Key Objectives and Actions:**

- ◆ The Ministry will report out to the public on the progress it is making in improving the protection of drinking water in British Columbia. This service plan marks the first step in this reporting process as part of its commitment to recommendation #7.
- ◆ The Ministry will provide leadership to support cross-government coordination of strategies to protect public health respecting drinking water by participating on senior level committees (i.e., the ADM Water Forum and the BC Water Committee) that will collaboratively make recommendations to clarify roles and responsibilities for source water protection. These actions are in response to OAG recommendations #1 and #2.

◆ The Ministry will lead – through collaboration and engagement with Indigenous peoples, partner agencies, water suppliers, stakeholders, and the general public – the development of a modernized provincial strategic plan for safe drinking water. This action is in response to OAG recommendation #3.

◆ The Ministry will include in future annual service plans a summary of actions in response to the OPHO’s progress report on activities under the DWPA as required by the Act.

**Goal 2: Collaborate with partner agencies to reduce risks to public health respecting drinking water.**

**Key Objectives and Actions:**

◆ The Ministry will work collaboratively with partner agencies to develop policies and strategies to prevent and mitigate risks to public health respecting drinking water by developing the following: *Guidelines for Ultraviolet Disinfection of Drinking Water*, *Design Guidelines for Drinking Water Systems in British Columbia*, *Guidelines for Pathogen Log Reduction Credit Assignment*, and *Emergency Response and Contingency Planning*. These actions are in response to OAG recommendation #4. Additional priority guidelines may be developed as identified through the Ministry’s process for guideline development, review and evaluation.

◆ The Ministry will collaborate with partner agencies to identify opportunities to support the safety and sustainability of small water systems including re-establishing a cross-agency working group focused on this task.