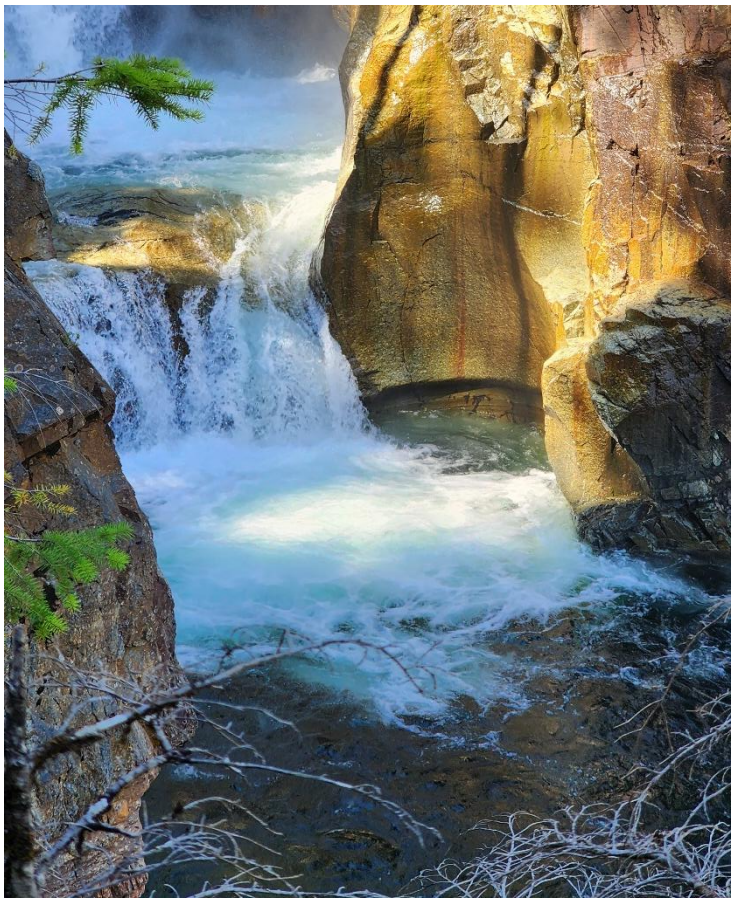
Updates to British Columbia Ambient Water Quality Guidelines – May 2026

Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

Water Protection and Sustainability Branch



BRITISH COLUMBIA

This table outlines recent updates to British Columbia's Ambient Water Quality Guidelines.

Date	Updated file	Description
May 2026	Iron Water Quality Guidelines	Freshwater Aquatic Life Water Quality Guidelines were updated using the Environment and Climate Change Canada Federal Environmental Quality Guidelines
February 2026	Manganese Water Quality Guidelines	Freshwater Aquatic Life Water Quality Guidelines were updated using the Canadian Council of Ministers of Environment Water Quality Guidelines.
May 2025	Cobalt Water Quality Guidelines	Freshwater Aquatic Life Water Quality Guidelines were updated using the Environment and Climate Change Canada Federal Environmental Quality Guidelines.
March 2025	Silver Water Quality Guidelines Silver Working Water Quality Guidelines	Freshwater and Marine Aquatic Life Guidelines were updated using the Canadian Environmental Quality Guideline from CCME. A long-term marine Working Water Quality Guideline for Silver was adapted from ANZECC.
February 2025	6PPD-Quinone Water Quality Guidelines	Aquatic Guideline was published.
August 2024	Working Water Quality Guidelines	The B.C. Working Water Quality Guidelines have been updated, with several new guidelines added and some existing ones modified.
July 2024	Lead Water Quality Guidelines	Aquatic Life Guideline was updated using the Federal Environmental Quality Guideline.
June 2024	Nickel Water Quality Guidelines	Aquatic Life Guidelines have been updated.
February 2024	Zinc Water Quality Guidelines	Corrected references to the previous B.C. WQG (1999) to clarify that the 1999 WQG was for total zinc (Table 7.1, Figure 9.1, and text throughout).
November 2023	Antimony Water Quality Guidelines	Aquatic Life Guideline was published.
August 2023	Zinc Water Quality Guidelines	Aquatic Life Guideline was updated using the CCME Environmental Quality Guideline.

April 2023	Aluminum Water Quality Guidelines	Aquatic Life Guideline was updated using the Federal Environmental Quality Guideline.
December 2021	Lead, Mercury, PCB, PAH, Chlorophenol Water Quality Guideline Overview and Technical Reports	Fish tissue guidelines for human consumption rescinded and removed due to out-of-date methods and information. Fish tissue guidelines for human consumption now based on the screening value approach as outlined in the Derivation of Screening Values for Contaminants in Fish Tissue.
September 2021	Molybdenum Water Quality Guidelines for the Protection of Freshwater Aquatic Life, Livestock, Wildlife and Irrigation	New water quality guideline developed using the most up to date science.
February 2021	Working Water Quality Guidelines	See document for all changes since 2017 version.
June 26th, 2020	Source Drinking Water Quality Guidelines: Guideline Summary	Clarity added to introduction about application of these guidelines. Thirty-two parameters have either been updated or newly adopted as SDWQGs.
2019	Recreational Water Quality Guidelines: Guideline Summary	Re-evaluated in 2019. No changes were made.
August 15, 2019	1) Copper Water Quality Guideline 2) B.C. BLM Software 3) Water Quality Guideline Derivation Protocol	1) New B.C.-derived Aquatic Life Water Quality Guideline Technical Report and users guide. 2) An accompanying B.C. Biotic Ligand Model Software and User's Guide to support the calculation of a B.C. copper water quality guideline. 3) An Updated B.C. Aquatic Life Water Quality Guideline Derivation Protocol document.
December 19, 2017	Recreational Water Quality Guidelines: Guideline Summary	All guidelines have been reviewed, updated and presented in a Guideline Summary.
December 19, 2017	Source Drinking Water Quality Guidelines: Guideline Summary	All guidelines have been reviewed, updated and presented in a Guideline Summary.
August 10, 2017	PAH-approved Freshwater And Marine Sediment Quality Guidelines	The Water Protection and Sustainability Branch rescind the B.C.-approved Freshwater And Marine Sediment Quality Guidelines for PAHs.
June 27, 2017	Working Water Quality Guidelines	In table 1, the term "dissolved" was removed from the Sulfide Water Quality Guideline.