



Ministry of
Forests

Annual Report 2023-24

Compliance and Enforcement Branch

For the period of April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024

Prepared for: Province of British Columbia

Prepared by: Ministry of Forests, Compliance and Enforcement Branch

VISION

Trusted to safeguard and regulate British Columbia's valued cultural and natural resources



**THIS REPORT INCLUDES STATISTICS FOR
COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT BRANCH ACTIVITIES
AS RECORDED BY THE MINISTRY OF FORESTS
FROM APRIL 1, 2023 TO MARCH 31, 2024**

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Introduction

The 2023-24 Compliance and Enforcement Branch (CEB) Annual Report was produced by the Ministry of Forests¹.

CEB remains within the Ministry of Forests' (FOR) Integrated Resource Operations Division (IROD) and there have been no changes to the Branch's mandate, or the Natural Resource Officer (NRO) authorities granted under the *Natural Resource Compliance Act*².

As part of CEB's vision, mission and goals, the Branch continues to evolve and serve as the premier investigative natural resource law enforcement agency for FOR, while also providing this service to the Water and Land programs in the Ministry of Water, Lands and Resource Stewardship (WLRS).

In 2022, CEB implemented a new branch structure that amalgamated eight regions to four areas: Coast, Interior, North and South, under the purview of Area Superintendents. Further review identified the need for an additional business line, Strategic Engagement that focuses on ministry and partner agencies with an emphasis on partnerships to advance reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. This business stream was developed early 2024, with full implementation at the start of the 2024/25 fiscal year.

This report will cover compliance³ and enforcement activities related to forests, land, water, wildfire, resource roads, heritage and archaeology. This report summarizes CEB's activities from April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024 and serves as a follow-up to its previous annual reports.

¹ Electronic copies of this report are available from the Ministry's Compliance and Enforcement Branch government website at [Natural Resource Compliance Reports and Statistics](#).

² https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/11021_01

³ Many of the technical terms used in this report are defined in the glossary that can be found online at: [Natural Resource Law Enforcement](#)

The Branch continues to focus on inspections and investigations that are aligned with our clients' priorities and that safeguard and regulate B.C.'s valued cultural and natural resources.

Natural resource activities in British Columbia are regulated by a wide range of legislation. This report provides information related to the following Acts: *Forest Act, Range Act, Wildfire Act, Forest and Range Practices Act, Land Act, Water Sustainability Act* and the *Heritage Conservation Act*; including, all the regulations associated with those Acts.

TABLE 1: KEY STATISTICS

1-Apr-2023 to 31-Mar-2024

Enforcement Actions Taken	671
Inspections	2,755
Violation Reports	3,923

Compliance and Enforcement Branch

Priorities for 2023-24

Emergency Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for fire, flood, drought, earthquake, pandemic, etc.
Wildfire Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human-caused wildfire • Fire prevention/preparedness
Indigenous Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build relationships and trust with First Nations and Indigenous communities • Develop infrastructure to support relationship building for the Indigenous Relations Restorative Justice Officer team
Land Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unauthorized use and occupation of Crown land and resources, including foreshore development • Conservation of heritage, ancestral belongings (artifacts) and archaeological sites
Forest Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest harvesting, silviculture and range practices
Water Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water use, changes in and about a stream, and/or surface water use • Dam and dugout construction and maintenance
Revenue Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timber pricing and appraisals, marking and transport
Resource Roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource road use, maintenance, and construction

Provincial Emergency Support Efforts

Over the years, British Columbia has faced various critical issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic and extreme climate-related events including floods, drought and wildfires. These events have caused severe consequences for many citizens and significant damage to Crown land across the province. As these occurrences have become more frequent and severe, the Branch continues to prioritize public safety through its emergency response efforts. During these challenging circumstances, CEB is able to assist with the response to these provincial emergencies by working collaboratively with local governments and First Nations partners to implement emergency response actions.

In the summer of 2023, the province experienced the most destructive wildfire season in B.C.’s history. With over two million hectares of forest and land burned, tens of thousands of people were forced to evacuate, and hundreds of homes were lost. At the same time, B.C. dealt with an unprecedented drought that saw 21 of the 34 basins at drought levels 4 or 5. NROs played a crucial role in responding to both of these significant challenges.

CEB’s activities involving the *Water Sustainability Act* and *Wildfire Act* were provided weekly to the Deputy Minister over the duration of the 2023 wildfire and drought seasons. CEB recorded the initiation of 104 water management investigations and 95 fire use investigations between April 1, 2023, to October 7, 2023.

TABLE 2: WILDFIRE AND DROUGHT ACTIVITIES

1-Apr-2023 to 07-Oct-2023

Activity	Action	Number of Records
<i>Water Sustainability Act</i>	Section 93 orders delivered	47
	Section 88 order notifications delivered	194
	Investigations opened	51
	Violation tickets issued	6
<i>Wildfire Act</i>	Fire Use investigations opened	95
	Fire Use violation tickets issued	48

Time Spent

“Time spent” refers to the amount of time that NROs engage in carrying out their core functions and overseeing natural resource activities related to the legislation they are mandated to enforce.

Time spent is a measure that allows the government to gauge the success of its efforts related to effective enforcement, timely completion of investigations, protecting the financial interests of the Crown through the administration of legislative sanctions, and partnerships that support reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

TABLE 3: TIME SPENT HOURS BY FUNCTION

1-Apr-2023 to 31-Mar-2024

Function	Inspection/ Patrol Hours	Investigation Hours	Total Hours by Function	% Total
Wildfire Management	4,645	10,310	14,955	23%
Forest Management	3,967	9,977	13,944	21%
Water Management	5,650	6,572	12,222	19%
Land Management	3,561	8,509	12,070	18%
Revenue Management	1,217	7,260	8,477	13%
Resource Roads	1,620	1,989	3,609	6%
Natural Resource Sector Support	90	51	140	*0%
Provincial Emergency	85	6	91	*0%
Grand Total	20,835	44,674	65,509	100%

* 0% is a rounding calculation to the nearest whole number

Inspections

An inspection is a systematic process to verify compliance with legal requirements. CEB inspections cover the legal obligations of licensees and the public. Inspections are conducted on a risk-based approach and are actioned in compliance with the legislation that falls within the mandate of CEB. NROs evaluate the risks associated with various types of sites and activities and prioritize their inspections to focus on activities with higher risks to human health and safety, environmental, economic or social risks.

TABLE 4: INSPECTIONS BY FUNCTION

1-Apr-2023 to 31-Mar-2024

Function	Number of Records	% Totals
Water Management	906	33%
Wildfire Management	536	19%
Land Management	426	15%
Forest Management	392	14%
Revenue Management	293	11%
Resource Roads	190	7%
Natural Resource Sector Support	7	*0%
Provincial Emergency	5	*0%
Grand Total	2,755	100%

* 0% is a rounding calculation to the nearest whole number

Enforcement Actions

Enforcement actions are used when an NRO determines that legislation has been contravened and a formal sanction is warranted. For example, enforcement actions may address contraventions that have damaged environmental, social or economic values.

TABLE 5: ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS BY FUNCTION

1-Apr-2023 to 31-Mar-2024

Function	Compliance Notice	Warning Ticket/ Letter	Stop Work Order	Violation Ticket	Order to Vacate	Trespass Notice	Seizure	Search Warrant	Restorative Justice	Administrative Hearing	Prosecution	Remediation Order	Civil Remedies	TOTAL BY FUNCTION
Wildfire Management	20	45		80				9	3	15				172
Water Management	34	33	40	46				2				3		158
Revenue Management	35	40		31						12				118
Land Management	49	5	4		2	36	5	1			1		1	104
Forest Management	21	16	1	33						15				86
Resource Roads	21	2	1	7						1				32
NRM Support				1										1
TOTAL ACTIONS	180	141	46	198	2	36	5	12	3	43	1	3	1	671

Monetary Penalties

Monetary penalties may be applied by a statutory decision maker if they have determined that an individual or licensee has contravened legislation. Monetary penalties should not be confused with fines, which are imposed by the courts if an individual or licensee is convicted of an offence.

TABLE 6: VIOLATION TICKETS AND ADMINISTRATIVE PENALTIES

1-Apr-2023 to 31-Mar-2024

Violation Tickets Issued	198
Monetary Amount of Tickets Issued	\$104,256
Administrative Penalties Levied	18
Monetary Amount of Penalties	\$657,552
Cost Recovery and Damages Incurred	\$420,386
Total	\$1,182,194
Monetary Amounts in Appeal	\$2,067,588

Natural Resource Violation Reporting

The Natural Resource Violation Reporting (NRVR) system was developed to collect and record reports of alleged violations of natural resource legislation. NRVR is for public use, but the system also allows the ministry’s partner agencies and other program areas within the Natural Resource Ministries (NRM) to record issues identified by their staff.

Reports can be submitted online or by telephone. All submitted reports are received by FrontCounter BC staff who administer the intake process. Every violation report is reviewed by an NRO Supervisor and evaluated considering the Branch’s identified priorities to determine an appropriate response. Reports of alleged violations help the Branch determine where inspections and investigations need to be conducted.

Anyone can report a Natural Resource Violation:

- by telephone: 1-877-952-7277
- online: [Report of a Natural Resource Violation](#)

TABLE 9: VIOLATION REPORT BY FUNCTION

1-Apr-2023 to 31-Mar-2024

Function	Records	% Total
Land Management	1,308	33%
Water Management	1,123	29%
Wildfire Management	645	16%
Forest Management	549	14%
Natural Resource Sector Support	194	5%
Resource Roads	81	2%
Revenue Management	23	1%
Grand Total	3,923	100%

Indigenous Partnerships

The payεčepot yiyxmet kʷoms taʔow Agreement

In the coastal community of Powell River, the Tla'amin Nation has been working closely with CEB over the years to manage impacts on Tla'amin's ancestral belongings and archaeological sites within their territory. As the investigative enforcement agency for the *Heritage Conservation Act* (HCA), CEB has responded to reports of unauthorized destruction/impacts to the archaeological features in Tla'amin territory and conduct investigations accordingly.

On October 10, 2023, Hegus (meaning 'Chief' in the Tla'amin Nation's native language: ʔayʔajʉθəm), John Hackett signed the payεčepot yiyxmet kʷoms taʔow agreement (which translates to "always take care of our teachings from our ancestors"). The agreement allows Tla'amin to provide CEB with culturally important and sensitive information that will aid in planning CEB activities in the territory. The agreement also allows CEB to legally and proactively share inspection and investigation information with our Tla'amin partners more efficiently by eliminating the administratively formal Freedom of Information (FOI) process.

The payεčepot yiyxmet kʷoms taʔow is the first of its kind in B.C. and is a positive step towards genuine reconciliation with CEB and First Nations partners.

Reviews and Appeals

If a person is dissatisfied with an administrative determination made by a statutory decision maker, they may ask for the decision to be reviewed by the decision maker if there is new evidence to consider. Alternatively, the person may challenge the decision by submitting a notice of appeal to the Forest Appeals Commission or to the Environmental Appeal Board.

For more information about the Forest Appeals Commission, visit:

[Forest Appeals Commission](#)

For more information about the Environmental Appeal Board, visit

[Environmental Appeal Board](#)

Learn More

For more information about the Compliance and Enforcement Branch and the role of Natural Resource Officers, please visit:

[Natural Resource Law Enforcement- Natural Resource Officers](#)

Mission

Provide focused enforcement services that meet the needs of our clients and partners to achieve responsible stewardship. We are committed to doing this with integrity, professionalism, accountability, and genuine collaboration.

