

Audit Plan for 2023/24

Chief Auditor's Remarks

As the new chief auditor, I would like to begin by thanking the previous chief auditor, Karina Sangha, for her leadership and efforts in growing the audit program. The team is fortunate to have the tools and resources to which Karina made significant contributions.

I am pleased to release the 2023/24 Audit Plan for the Mine Audits Unit (the Audit Unit). This plan identifies the audit priorities for the 2023/24 fiscal year (FY), which runs from April 1, 2023 to March 31st, 2024.

The FY 2023/24 Audit Plan, developed in consultation with key stakeholders, prioritizes focusing the Audit Team's resources on advancing the current suite of audits in progress toward completion. The Securities for Exploration Activities and Major Mine Closure Audits are expected to both be substantially complete prior to the end of the 2024/25 audit planning period. No new audits have been selected for initiation in 2023/24.

As a relatively new program area, the Audit Team continues its focus on program development in the fiscal year, and with the addition of several new team members, including a new Chief Auditor, the organization is also focussed on skill development and knowledge building in FY 2023/24.

In December 2023, the Ministry provided the Chief Auditor with a progress update summarizing actions taken in response to the team's first two audit reports: Code Requirements for Tailings Storage Facilities (2021) and Worker Protection in Mobile Equipment Near Water (2022). Per our [Memorandum of Understanding](#), the Ministry has committed to providing the Chief Auditor with annual progress updates on actions taken to address previous audit recommendations. The 2022/23 [progress update](#) is available on our website.

In building our knowledge and understanding of the audit function, the team recognizes the importance of engagement with its partners and will continue to build its relationships with the Ministry, Indigenous peoples and interested parties. All partners will be engaged in the FY 2024/25 audit planning process, which is expected to be initiated in January 2024.

The Audit Unit team includes experienced professionals in audits and the mining industry. As one of the new team members and new to the role of Chief Auditor, I am eager to work with the Audit Unit, engage with all stakeholders, and deliver recommendations for continuous improvement that support effective mining regulation in B.C.

Kevin Kirkland
Chief Auditor

Background

Mine Audits Unit

Led by the Chief Auditor, the Audit Unit is a dedicated team in the Ministry. The team evaluates and makes public recommendations to government about the effectiveness of the Ministry's regulatory program in protecting the public, workers and the environment.

Purpose of the Audit Plan

Every year, the Chief Auditor publishes an [Audit Plan](#) outlining the audits the Audit Unit will prioritize in that year.

The Audit Plan provides audit teams with a starting point for their work. From there, the teams develop a specific objective, scope and design for each audit based on research and engagement with Indigenous peoples and interested parties (e.g., industry, labour representatives, non-governmental organizations and other regulatory bodies).

Every audit included in the Audit Plan will generally consist of four iterative phases:

- **Planning** – Gather background information on the audit topic and develop a plan for the audit, summarized as a Terms of Reference on the Audit Unit's website.
- **Examination** – Collect and analyze data to establish findings and develop a conclusion in response to the audit objective.
- **Reporting** – Develop and release a report summarizing the audit findings, conclusion and recommendations.
- **Follow up** – Monitor the Ministry's actions in relation to the audit findings, conclusion and recommendations.

The Chief Auditor may review and adjust the Audit Plan, as necessary. Any changes will be documented and reported in the following year's Audit Plan.

Audit topic selection

The Audit Unit identifies potential audit topics on an ongoing basis through multiple information sources, including Ministry data and previous audit findings. The Audit Unit also accepts topic suggestions from other government staff and external parties, including Indigenous peoples. If a topic is aligned with the Audit Unit's mandate, it will be meaningfully considered for an audit.

In each annual planning cycle, the Audit Unit prioritizes its current list of potential topics and develops a shortlist for the Chief Auditor's consideration. Prioritization is based on the following factors:

- **Value** – The potential benefit of performing an audit to provincial mining regulation
- **Interest** – Different perspectives about the topic and its relative importance to Indigenous peoples and interested parties
- **Auditability** – The Audit Unit's ability to complete an audit of the topic given available resources, expertise, data and information

The Chief Auditor decides which topics to include in the Audit Plan each year, in consideration of the shortlist of priority topics. Any potential topics not included in the Audit Plan may be considered in future years.

Priorities in 2023/24

Audits in progress

The Audit Unit has four audits in progress, which are summarized below, including links to each audit's Terms of Reference.

Name	Objective	Status at beginning of FY 23/24
Major mine closure	To determine whether the Ministry's regulatory program is setting major mines up to successfully advance the process of mine closure to meet post-mining land uses.	Examination phase
Occupational health and safety committees	To determine whether the Ministry's regulatory program supports the identification of workplace hazards by occupational health and safety committees and the mitigation of those hazards.	Examination phase
Security for exploration activities	To determine whether the process for managing security for exploration activities accounts for mine reclamation and the mitigation of damage to watercourses and cultural heritage resources.	Reporting phase
Confined spaces	To determine whether the Ministry's regulatory program supports effective management of confined spaces.	Planning phase

Future audits

Identified through our annual planning process, the following topics may be considered for future Audit Plans. These topics are broad and may be the subject of more than one audit. This list is subject to change as topics are re-evaluated in each annual planning cycle.

Potential future audit topics	
Abandoned mines	Administrative monetary penalties
Asbestos	Bullying and harassment
Code-required annual reporting	Contractors
Cumulative effects	Dangerous occurrences
Fatigue	Fuel transport and storage
Guarding	Health and safety in the exploration industry
Highwall	Mine and reclamation plan updates
Mine emergency response	Mine roads and haul roads
Ministry certifications	Permit application requirements
Physical stress	Pits, slopes and dumps
Placer mining	Security for major mines
Variance requests	Ventilation
Water management	Water treatment

Future Audit Plans may also include follow up audits to verify and assess the Ministry's progress in relation to previous audit findings, conclusions and recommendations.

If you have a topic you would like the Audit Unit to consider, or if you have an interest in any of the topics listed above, please [contact us](#).