



# PROGRAM CHARTER



## Mission

The Mine Audits Unit (the Audit Unit) evaluates the effectiveness of the provincial regulatory program for mining in protecting the public, workers and the environment.

## Authority

The Audit Unit is led by the Chief Auditor, whose authorities and responsibilities related to audits are set out in Sections 2.1 to 2.6 of the [Mines Act \(the Act\)](#). When conducting audits, Audit Unit staff are accountable to the Chief Auditor. Audit Unit staff may be delegated select authorities under the Act to assist them in conducting activities on the Chief Auditor's behalf.

## Scope of Work

The Audit Unit conducts audits of the provincial regulatory program for mining through the lens of specific audit topics. Each audit conducted by the Audit Unit focuses on an area of mining that falls under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation (the Ministry).<sup>1</sup>

In each audit, the Audit Unit generally considers:

- ▶ Current regulatory requirements
- ▶ Ministry policies, programs, practices and actions
- ▶ Compliance status of regulated parties, as well as environmental and health and safety outcomes on mine sites

Each audit culminates in a public report, documenting the audit findings, conclusion and any recommendations for the Ministry.

## Values

The Audit Unit's activities are guided by the following values and commitments:

- ▶ Produce work that adds value to the Ministry's activities; supports the protection of the public, workers and the environment; and helps industry operate safely and successfully in B.C.
- ▶ Encourage continuous improvement of the provincial regulatory program for mining, as well as the Audit Unit's operations.
- ▶ Engage with and meaningfully consider the perspectives of Indigenous peoples and interested parties.
- ▶ Conduct activities consistently, transparently and in accordance with the Audit Unit's policies and procedures.

## Independence and Objectivity

The Audit Unit's independence and objectivity are enshrined in the powers of the Chief Auditor, as set out in the Act. Under the Act, the Chief Auditor makes statutory decisions related to audits.

In addition to those set out in the Act, the Chief Auditor also makes key operational decisions for the team, including those pertaining to:

- ▶ The allocation of Audit Unit resources
- ▶ The development and approval of Audit Unit policies and procedures
- ▶ The development and approval of agreements between the Audit Unit and other parties

Organizationally, the Audit Unit is a dedicated team within the Ministry that is separate from other regulatory functions for mining, including permitting, compliance and enforcement. The Act prescribes that the role of Chief Auditor cannot be simultaneously held by the Chief Inspector of Mines, the Chief Permitting Officer or an inspector, nor can the Chief Auditor delegate their authorities to these persons.

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<sup>1</sup> The Ministry's regulatory framework includes: the [Mines Act](#), the [Mineral Tenure Act](#) and the [Coal Act](#); authorizations issued pursuant to these acts; supporting regulations; and the [Health, Safety and Reclamation Code for Mines in B.C.](#)

The Chief Auditor expects Audit Unit staff to conduct their activities free from undue influence by interested parties and in an unbiased manner. Staff in the Audit Unit have no direct responsibilities or authorities (operational or statutory) over areas they audit.

As per the Standards of Conduct for BC Public Service Employees, Audit Unit staff have a duty to report any known or potential conflicts of interest. Where a conflict of interest exists, or could be perceived to exist, the staff member and the Chief Auditor will follow the Conflict of Interest Guidelines for BC Public Service Employees to determine the appropriate course of action.

Where the Audit Unit retains contracted services, proponents will be assessed for conflicts of interest during the procurement process.

## Responsibility

The Chief Auditor has the following legislated responsibilities:

- ▶ Develop an Audit Plan identifying the subject matter of the audits to be given priority in that year per Section 2.3(a) of the Act.
- ▶ Publish the Audit Plan on a publicly accessible website maintained by the Chief Auditor per Section 2.3(b) of the Act.
- ▶ After completing an audit, provide an audit report to the Minister with the conclusions, reasons for the conclusions, and any recommendations per Section 2.6(1) of the Act.
- ▶ Publish any audit reports provided to the Minister on a public website maintained by the Chief Auditor per Section 2.6(2) of the Act.

In addition, the Chief Auditor will:

- ▶ Review this Program Charter on a regular basis and update it, if necessary.
- ▶ Develop, maintain and ensure adherence to a Reference Manual, which sets out the standards and procedures the Audit Unit will follow in conducting its activities.
- ▶ Maintain and ensure adherence to any agreements between the Audit Unit and other parties.
- ▶ Publish the Ministry's response to each audit.
- ▶ Publish periodic updates from the Ministry summarizing the organization's progress in addressing previous recommendations made by the Chief Auditor.
- ▶ Align the Audit Unit's work with the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* by building relationships with Indigenous peoples across B.C. and working with them to identify meaningful opportunities for their participation in the audit process.
- ▶ Ensure the use of a gender-based analysis plus approach to consider differential impacts on diverse groups of British Columbians in the Audit Unit's analyses and recommendations.
- ▶ Ensure staff in the Audit Unit have sufficient knowledge, skills and experience to fulfill their obligations under the Act, this Program Charter and the Audit Unit's Reference Manual.
- ▶ Develop, maintain and implement a quality assurance and improvement program covering all aspects of the Audit Unit's work.



Karina Sangha  
Chief Auditor