



**City of  
Courtenay**

# 2023 Annual Drinking Water Quality Report



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# 1. Introduction

In 2003, the Provincial Government passed legislation that brought into effect the *British Columbia Drinking Water Protection Act* (the Act) and the *Drinking Water Protection Regulation* (the Regulation). The Act and Regulation detail municipal responsibilities as a water supplier.

The Act covers all water systems other than single-family dwellings and systems excluded through the regulation. It outlines requirements for water suppliers in terms of ensuring that the water supplied to their users is potable — and meets any additional requirements established by the Regulation or by the water supply system's operating permit, as set by the local drinking water officer. The Regulation sets out requirements for drinking water quality including treatment, construction and operation of water systems, monitoring, reporting, and public notification for water quality advisories.

The City of Courtenay (the City) supplies potable water to approximately 26,000 residents and ICIA customers within City boundaries. The City has a bulk water agreement in place to purchase water from the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD).

# 2. General Description

The City operates and maintains a Class III Water Distribution System. This classification is determined through BC's Environmental Operation Certificate Program (EOCP) and is reviewed every 5 years. System risk has been reduced through the introduction of new preventative maintenance programs, implementation of SCADA monitoring, and initiation of the robust asset management program.

The City's water system consists of:

- 175 km of water mains;
- 809 hydrants;
- 6 pressure reducing valve stations;
- 1756 mainline valves; and
- 1 booster station containing 5 pumps.

This system is designed to adequately supply water to its end users and in the event of an emergency provides the required flow for fire protection.



### 3. Island Health

Island Health administers the Act and the Regulation. The Drinking Water Officer is responsible for issuing operating permits and monitoring compliance of drinking water systems. In BC the surface water treatment objectives for microbiological parameters are:

- 4 log (99.99%) removal or inactivation of viruses;
- 3 log (99.9%) removal or inactivation of *Giardia Lamblia* and *Cryptosporidium*;
- 2 treatment processes in place;
- 1 NTU or less turbidity in finished water; and
- 0 detected *E.coli*, total and fecal coliforms.

The City of Courtenay is required to meet these objectives under their operating permit.

### 4. Source Water

The water provided by the CVRD is sourced from Comox Lake utilizing a deep water intake. The water is transported via a transmission pipeline to the CVRD's water treatment plant.

#### 4.1 Source Water Quality

In 2021, the CVRD commissioned the new deep water intake in Comox Lake and water treatment plant. The new water treatment plant meets provincial health standards and uses filtration, UV disinfection, and chlorination to remove the risks of viruses and bacteria in our drinking water.

#### 4.2 Source Water Testing

Quality of the source water is monitored and tested by the Comox Valley Regional District. The CVRD water quality reports can be found on their website at <https://www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/waterquality>.

#### 4.3 Transmission System

Water supply is distributed to reservoirs in Courtenay via large transmission mains all owned and operated by the CVRD. These reservoirs connect with the City's distribution mains to transport water to residential, commercial and institutional water services.

### 5. Distribution Sampling

In order to ensure water quality standards and regulations are met the City continuously tests the water quality throughout the distribution system. Under guidance from Island Health the City has installed a series of water sampling test points. The City completes weekly sampling and submits the samples to Island Health for testing.





If a sample shows evidence of Total Coliforms and/or *E. coli*, the Lab will immediately contact, by phone, both the City Public Works and Island Health in keeping with the requirements of the Regulation.

## 5.1 Sample Requirements

The Regulation requires the City to take a minimum number of samples per month based on the following population figures:

- Less than 5,000 4
- 5,000 to 90,000 1 per 1,000 population
- More than 90,000 90 plus 1 per 10,000 population in excess of 90,000

## 5.2 Sample Stations

The City has eleven sample stations located throughout the distribution system with varying flow patterns, rates and conditions. See Figure 1 for sample station locations.

## 5.3 Distribution Sampling Overview

The City's current population mandates a minimum of 26 samples to be collected and tested each month. Sampling frequency and locations continue to meet the monitoring protocol set out by Island Health.

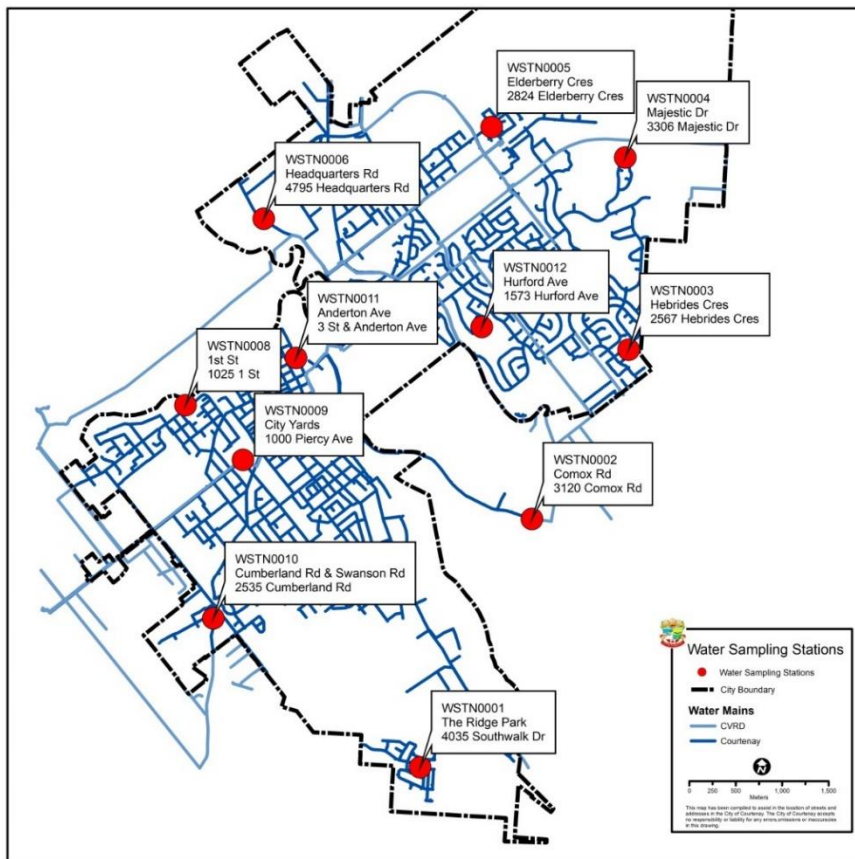


Figure 1.  
Sample station locations.

## 6. Standards & Regulatory Distribution Testing

The Regulation requires a supplier to collect and test samples from the distribution system. The Canadian Centre for Disease Control (CDC) Laboratory in Vancouver analyzes all water samples sent by Island Health.

Physical and bacteriological parameters are collected, sampled and tested from each of the City's sampling sites; 4 sites are sampled weekly, 7 are sampled on an alternating weekly schedule.

Water sampling results for 2023 can be found on the Island Health website:

<https://www.islandhealth.ca/learn-about-health/drinking-water/water-sampling-results>

In 2023, a total of 384 samples were collected. There were 8 samples whose results may have validity issues due a greater than 30 hour time delay from when the samples were taken and when the samples were received at the testing facility.

### 6.1 Free Chlorine Residual

In order to control the re-growth of bacteria in the distribution system it is important to maintain a disinfectant residual.

**Permit Requirements:** Minimum disinfectant residual of 0.2 mg/L free chlorine.

#### 6.1.1 Results

In 2023, no samples fell below the benchmark of 0.2 mg/L of free chlorine residual.

### 6.2 Turbidity

Turbidity is a valuable indicator of water quality. Turbidity is a measure of the cloudiness of water caused by suspended particles given in NTU. The measurement is a quantification of the scattering and absorption of light by these suspended particles; the higher the turbidity the cloudier the water. Water with high turbidity may shield harmful organisms which increases disinfectant demand.

**Guideline:** Water entering a distribution system should have 1 NTU or less.

#### 6.2.1 Results

In 2023, average turbidity within the distribution system was 0.22 NTU.

### 6.3 Total Coliforms

Total coliforms is typically used as an indicator for overall drinking water quality.

**Standard:** Retesting is required with detection of total coliforms from consecutive samples from the same site or from more than 10% of the samples collected in a given sampling period



### 6.3.1 Results

In 2023, no samples in the City of Courtenay tested positive for total coliforms. No samples tested positive for *E.coli*.

## 6.4 *Escherichia coli*

*E. coli* is an indicator of fecal contamination that is used to verify drinking water quality. The Regulation establishes the parameter and standards for the microbiological quality of water.

**Standard:** No detectable *E. coli* per 100 ml.

### 6.4.1 Results

In 2023, no samples in the City of Courtenay tested positive for *E.coli*.

## 6.5 Trihalomethanes

Trihalomethane are used to indicate the potential creation of harmful bi-products during the chlorination process due to organic matter in the source water. Samples are collected for trihalomethanes.

**Standard:** Maximum allowable concentration of 100 ppb.

### 6.5.1 Results

In 2023, no collected samples in the City of Courtenay exceeded the guidelines for trihalomethanes.

## 6.6 Haloacetic Acids

Haloacetic acids are used to indicate the potential creation of harmful bi-products during the chlorination process due to organic matter in the source water. Samples are collected for haloacetic acids quarterly.

**Standard:** Maximum allowable concentration of 0.08 mg/L.

### 6.6.1 Results

In 2023, no collected samples in the City of Courtenay exceeded the guidelines for haloacetic acids.

## 6.7 Total Metals

Total metals are sampled to monitor ongoing water quality. Samples are collected for total metals bi-annually.





**Standard:** Maximum allowable concentrations for total metals are listed individually in the Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water.

### 6.7.1 Results

In 2023, no total metal concentrations in collected samples in the City of Courtenay exceeded the guidelines for total metals.

## 7. Unidirectional Flushing Program

The City of Courtenay's Unidirectional Flushing (UDF) program is aimed to enhance the overall water quality within the water distribution system and improve systems operations by: reducing turbidity, removing sediment, silt and biofilms, lowering chlorine demand, increasing system hydraulic capacity and increasing the life of system components. This program supports the City's Asset Management System as it allows for in situ condition inspections of the water system and helps maintain water infrastructure integrity, thus increasing the service life of the system and its appurtenances.

Due to prolonged drought in the fall and the resulting water use restrictions the UDF flushing planned for 2022 was completed in spring 2023. The UDF areas completed in 2023 were Area 5, Area 9 and Area 10. See Table 1 for the flushing summary data.

Table 1. 2023 Unidirectional Flushing Program Summary

Area	Length (km)	Average Turbidity (NTU)	Max Turbidity (NTU)	Average Flush Time (min)
5	27	26	1000	26
9	9	59	710	22
10	19	22	513	17

## 8. Cross Connection Control Program

The City of Courtenay's Cross Connection Control Program is aimed to reduce risks and the likelihood of contamination by eliminating or controlling unprotected cross connections within the potable water system. The program will be implemented in stages; initially the program will be focused on City-owned assets, buildings and facilities and will then be expanded to include Industrial, Commercial, Institutional, and Agricultural (ICIA) customers. See Table 2 for the implementation plan.



Table 2. Cross Connection Control Program Implementation

Year	Program Actions
2024	Continue with City program.
2025	Develop and adopt Cross Connection Control Bylaw, and develop education and outreach program for ICIA customers.
2026	Deliver ICIA education program, identify severe and moderate hazard customers, schedule inspection surveys to confirm level of protection required and provide surveys to customers for device installation.
2027	Continue with ICIA program, once severe and moderate level hazard inspections are complete follow with minor level hazard customers, provide surveys to customers for device installation. Develop and deliver residential awareness campaign.

## 9. System Improvements

The City continues to make improvements to the overall distribution system and its appurtenances. Projects are identified and prioritized within the Asset Management Program enabling sound financial planning to maintain and enhance level of service to the community.

System Improvements in 2023 included:

- Fire flow upgrade project completed in the Cotton Road and North Island Highway area.
- Replacement of 3 hydrants.
- Installation of a PSV kiosk in east Courtenay as part of the District Metering Zone project for Zone 1, to be commissioned in 2024.

## 10. Operator Qualifications

The Environmental Operator Certification Program (EOCP) is a not-for-profit society that oversees the certification of water and wastewater operators in BC. The City has 10 EOCP-certified water operators with the following qualifications:

- Water Distribution I - 1 certified employee
- Water Distribution II - 6 certified employees
- Water Distribution III - 2 certified employees
- Water Distribution IV - 2 certified employees
- Water Treatment I - 1 certified employee



## 11. Emergency Response Plan

The Emergency Response Plan has been prepared to provide staff with an effective plan to respond to an emergency related to the City's water distribution system. This plan is resubmitted to Island Health whenever updates are made.

