

2023

**CITY OF PRINCE GEORGE
ANNUAL WATER SYSTEM REPORT**



**CITY OF
PRINCE GEORGE**

City of Prince George



(Image source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prince_George,_British_Columbia)

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1.0 Introduction

The City of Prince George has prepared this Annual Water System Report (Report) for 2023 in compliance with the British Columbia Drinking Water Protection Act and the Northern Health Authority Operating Permit Requirements. The Report is intended to provide information to the public and government agencies regarding the quality of the drinking water and operation of the water system.

The City takes great pride in their drinking water, and strives to provide the highest quality of water to the residents of Prince George. Experienced, knowledgeable staff oversee the collection, pumping, distribution, and protection of the City of Prince George Water Distribution System.

The City provides this report to the Northern Health Authority (NHA) and posts it on the City's website, www.princegeorge.ca

2.0 Northern Health Authority Operating Permit

The Drinking Water Protection Regulation requires that the City obtain an Operating Permit from the local health authority before water can be provided to users. Northern Health Authority (NHA) provides the City with the conditions of their Operating Permits.

In the past the City had 5 operating permits, one each for the separate systems in and around the City. Over the years these systems have gradually been connected to each other, the last connection being completed in 2017 which links the Hart water network to the rest of the system. Starting in 2021 Northern Health consolidated these systems into one single permit. The Western Acres system remains the only isolated network and will remain that way for the foreseeable future.

In 2023, the City had two operating permits. The names and conditions of the operating permits are as follows:

Prince George CWS

- Maintain a minimum free chlorine residual of 0.2ppm throughout the distribution system
- Maintain a minimum of 1 water bacteriology sample per month per 1000 residents unless the Environmental Health Officer requests a greater frequency
- Maintain an up to date Emergency Response Plan
- Operator must be trained and certified to the level specified by the Environmental Operators Certification Program
- Submit water chemistry data every year unless the Environmental Health Officer requests a greater frequency

Prince George CWS – PZ 25

- Maintain ongoing water bacteriology sampling as per schedule
- Maintain Level 4WD staff training and certification
- Maintain a cross-connection control program
- Maintain a wellhead/aquifer protection program.
- Maintain a minimum free chlorine residual of 0.2 ppm throughout the distribution system.

The City was compliant with all conditions of the permits.

3.0 Drinking Water System

Prince George is a city of 82,637 people, as per the 2023 census, located in central British Columbia. Being at the intersection of two major highways as well as a major junction for rail traffic, Prince George services most of the northern portion of the province. Two major rivers, Nechako and Fraser, provide historic trade routes to the city. The groundwater aquifers from which the City provides much of its water are under direct influence from these waterways. The main water system for the city covers over 90% of the developed area.

3.1 Distribution System Overview

The City supplies potable water through more than 800km of distribution pipes. The table below shows the number of connections, serviced population, and volume of water supplied in 2023:

Year	Residential Connections	Other Connections	Serviced Population	Water Supplied (m ³)
2023	24,057	4,184	73050	11,333,378

Seven (7) groundwater well locations draw from underground aquifers to provide the City of Prince George with water. The City relies on nine (9) booster pump stations to transport the water throughout the distribution system. There are fifteen (15) water reservoirs throughout the City. The reservoirs provide storage capacity for potable water use, as well as fire protection. The City's total storage capacity of all the reservoirs combined in 2023 was 64,526,161 liters of water.

Throughout the City's water distribution system, there are twenty-five (25) pressure reducing valve (PRV) locations. The pressure reducing valves, along with the reservoirs, allow the City to provide sustained pressure throughout the City's twenty-one (21) pressure zones. Pressures zones can be viewed on the City of Prince George Open Data Portal through the following link [CoPG Pressure Zones](#). The City has 7,907 system valves. These valves allow the City to isolate areas for operations and maintenance purposes. The City of Prince George has 2,200 hydrants connected to the water



distribution system. Hydrants are used primarily for firefighting but can be a source of water for operational and maintenance purposes.

The City uses a Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system to monitor and control equipment. The SCADA system will send an alarm notification to staff when equipment is not operating as required. One of the main functions of the SCADA system is water level monitoring. Water levels in the reservoirs are monitored with sensors and instruct the pumps when to start and stop.

The following subcategories identify the operational, maintenance and upgrades of note, completed within the highlighted areas of the City of Prince George Water Distribution System in 2023. City staff perform routine maintenance and operational work to maintain the City's infrastructure, some of which is not contained in this report.

3.1.1 System Management

The City utilizes an asset management strategy to govern decision making for future upgrades, as well as operational and maintenance efficiencies. Insufficient fire flow, deteriorating infrastructure, water quality, and availability to customers are examples of the criteria considered. The City is one of over fifty municipalities that participate in the National Water and Wastewater Benchmarking Initiative (NWWBI). Benchmarking can help utility managers to achieve continuous performance improvement towards the utility's goals. The Utilities Division utilizes a Computer Maintenance Management System (CMMS) called Cityworks to schedule and document operational, maintenance and capital works performed. Utilities strives to continuously improve the use of Cityworks to ensure efficient and effective operations.

3.1.2 Supply Wells

Three major groundwater wells along the Nechako River (PW601, PW605, PW660) provide most of the water for the system. Two groundwater wells along the western bank of the Fraser River (PW621, PW624) provide additional flow to a portion of the main system during summer months. One groundwater well on the eastern bank of the Fraser River (PW627) has transitioned into backup supply for the BCR Industrial area. One groundwater well provides water to a separate system in the Southwest corner of the city (PW652). Table 1 shows a breakdown of the wells and the percentage of total water supplied.

Table 1: City of Prince George Well Location Details



NAME	Source (Area of Influence)	Type of Well	% of Total Water Supplied to City 2023
PW601	Groundwater (Nechako River)	Radial Collector	25.62%
PW605	Groundwater (Nechako River)	Radial Collector	50.33%
PW621/624	Groundwater (Fraser River)	Standard x2	6.56%
PW627 (Offline)	Groundwater (Fraser River)	Standard x2	0%
PW652	Groundwater	Standard x2	0.29%
PW660	Groundwater (Nechako River)	Radial Collector	17.2%

Operational

Groundwater at Risk of Containing Pathogens (GARP) Risk Assessment

In 2018, the City completed a Groundwater at Risk of Containing Pathogens (GARP) Risk Assessment for PW601, PW605 and PW660. The NHA Drinking Water Officer suggested the City obtain a GARP determination for these wells. The City acquired a Hydrogeologist to conduct the GARP Risk Assessment. A Level 2 GARP Investigation, following the Ministry of Health's GARP Guideline, was completed. The consulting Hydrogeologist provided a final report in January 2019. The report indicated a Level 3 GARP Investigation be conducted, as well as an increase in chlorine residuals from PW605. The City followed the advice, conducted a yearlong sampling routine throughout 2019, and increased disinfection levels at PW605. The City provided the GARP Risk Assessment to the NHA.

The data from the yearlong sampling routine was analyzed in early 2020 and was determined to be insufficient to provide a determination. Another round of sampling was recommended, with some adjustment to the chlorine injection location at PW605. The City was unable to complete the adjustments in time to collect all the 2021 samples due to material shortages and long lead times caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Operational issues with the new chlorine system also prevented collection of all required samples in 2022. Sampling was continued on the established routine at available sites to continue building the data set and was continued at all sites in 2023.



Major Maintenance/Upgrades

PW605	PW624
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New chlorine dosing skid and injection point installed • Complete rebuild of one well pump, including replacement of column and shaft • Replacement of top bearing of pump motor #1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replacement of pump control valve. • New chlorine injection pumps • Upgrade pump soft starter
PW660	PW 636
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete rebuild of well pump, including renewal of column • Addition of two more well pumps along with new VFD's and new chlorine injection skid scheduled to be completed at the end of 2024. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replacement of pump motor • New HMI control screen • SCADA upgrade for station controls

3.1.3 Booster Stations

Major Maintenance/Upgrades

PW602	PW623
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete rebuild of Pump # 1 • Complete rebuild of pressure relief valve. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New security fence around station. •
PW628	PW636
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New water meter installed • SCADA upgrade. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scada Control system upgrade.
PW650	PW652
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building exterior painted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rebuild Pump # 1 and 2 jockey pumps and install 2 new VFD's.

3.1.4 Reservoirs

Major Maintenance/Upgrades

In 2017, the City started an inspection and cleaning schedule for the potable water reservoirs. Inspection involved the use of a remote operated vehicle (ROV) inside the reservoir while it was full of water. Cleaning consists of removing the sediment from the interior floor. All equipment entering the potable water reservoir is thoroughly cleaned and disinfected prior to entry. Table 3 identifies the work accomplished at the completion of 2022. All reservoirs requiring cleaning have now been completed and the City will now implement a regular interior inspection schedule. All reservoirs are going to be re-inspected during the summer of 2025.



Table 3: Reservoir Inspection & Cleaning Completed

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Inspected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PW803 • PW805 • PW810 • PW827 • PW828 • PW830 • PW836 • PW860 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PW806 • PW814 • PW817 • PW823 • PW824 • PW832 				
Cleaned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PW860 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PW810 • PW817 • PW824 • PW832 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PW803 • PW806 • PW827 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PW823 • PW828 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PW830 • PW836 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PW805

3.1.5 Pressure Reducing Valves (PRV)

Operational

PRV Inspections

Bi-annual inspections are completed on City PRV's to ensure they are operating as designed and to minimize the risk of fluctuations in system pressures. The majority of PRV's are located in underground vaults and require a confined space entry to perform inspection and maintenance activities. Plans to raise PRV's to ground level where possible to eliminate the confined space entry are under discussion.

Major Maintenance/Upgrades

PW640
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace obsolete roll seal control valve, install flow meter and upgrade SCADA control.

3.1.6 Distribution System

Major Maintenance/Upgrades

Unidirectional Flushing



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Unidirectional flushing of water is a method used to clear blockages, debris, and other unwanted material from water mains. This technique involves deliberately releasing high-pressure, high-velocity water flow in a single direction through a single pipeline. This helps reduce turbidity and enhance free chlorine residual throughout a water system, thus improving overall water quality. In 2023, the City flushed 31.6km of water main, 5.45% of the water distribution system.

Valve Maintenance

The City performs valve maintenance throughout the year. City staff operate or “exercise” the valve to determine its condition and confirm if they will work when needed. The City has reported 370 valves exercised in 2023.

Hydrant Maintenance

Hydrants play a critical role in providing local areas with fire protection services. The City performed 456 hydrant inspections in 2023. The City is required to perform an inspection on hydrants annually and after each operation as per National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).

Water Main/Service Connection Repairs

A break in a water main or service connection may cause negative effects within a water distribution system. A water service connection is a direct connection from the water main to the property. The City repaired/replaced 132 water service connections in 2023 due to immediate or anticipated failure. The City also experienced water main breaks requiring repair, 11 in 2023. Due to the geographical location of Prince George, water pipes are required to be buried to a depth that will prevent them from freezing. This means the City typically must excavate up to ten (10) feet, sometimes deeper, below ground level to perform the work. The water from a pipe break may take time to come to the surface, due to the depth of bury. The City uses various methods to check for leaks in our water system such as sounding technology. This technology allows workers to locate a problem before it becomes a major issue.

3.2 Water Production

The City reports water production totals to the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development Water Management Branch annually. Table 5 identifies the reported monthly volumes of water produced in 2023. This is reported in cubic metres as volumes are substantial. One (1) cubic metre is equal to one thousand (1000) litres.

Table 5: City of Prince George 2023 Monthly Water Production Totals

Month	Cubic Metres 2023
January	785,561
February	728,632
March	866,369
April	737,125
May	1,211,817
June	1,340,140
July	1,196,605
August	1,202,116
September	985,450
October	763,222
November	775,346
December	740,995
Total:	11,333,378

3.4 Water Meter Program

3.4.1 Program Overview

A water meter is a device that measures the amount of water that passes through it. The City utilizes water meters, inside the groundwater well stations to record how much water the wells produce. Within the distribution system, there are sub-meters, located inside the booster stations. A water meter identifies pump flow volumes, which assists with maintenance planning. Further downstream, water meters are located on some individual water service connections. Having water meters at varying locations throughout the distribution system allows a Utility to identify area demands and locations where leakage may be occurring. The City had 4739 consumer water meters located on water service connections at the end of 2023.

A water meter is required on the water service connection when any new building is constructed (including a carriage house), mobile home placed on a lot, or when a plumbing permit is obtained for three (3) or more fixtures. All Industrial, Commercial, or Institutional buildings require a water meter as well. Meter sizing is determined by the amount of flow that is required to meet the needs of the property.



4.0 Water Quality

4.1 Overview

The use of underground aquifers allows the City to utilize the gravel bed layer between the surface water and the pump intakes as a natural filtration system. The City has no additional filtration systems. The City ensures the water is potable through water sampling protocols, disinfection, and a cross-connection control program. The Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality (Guideline), set by Health Canada, determine the maximum acceptable concentration (MAC) and aesthetic objective (AO) for various parameters within Canadian drinking water systems. The City strictly adheres to these guidelines.

4.2 Water Quality Sampling

4.2.1 Bacteriological Samples

The City obtains bacteriological samples on a weekly basis from various locations throughout the distribution system. The City is required to provide 74 samples from the distribution system per month. The City provided an average of 30 samples per week (120 samples per month), as per the NHA’s request. The City achieved their required sampling frequency in 2023.

The drinking water samples were sent to the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) to confirm the absence of *E. coli* and total coliforms. The results were provided to the Environmental Health Officer within the NHA and to City staff.

The City met the Drinking Water Protection Regulation standards in 2023 as outlined below in Table 6.

**Table 6: Drinking Water Protection Regulation
Schedule A
Water Quality Standards for Potable Water**

Parameter:	Standard:
Fecal coliform bacteria	No detectable fecal coliform bacteria per 100 ml
<i>Escherichia coli</i>	No detectable <i>Escherichia coli</i> per 100 ml
Total coliform bacteria	
(a) 1 sample in a 30 day period	No detectable total coliform bacteria per 100 ml
(b) more than 1 sample in a 30 day period	At least 90% of samples have no detectable total coliform bacteria per 100 ml and no sample has more than 10 total coliform bacteria per 100 ml



4.2.2 Boil Water Advisories

The regulating health authority of a water distribution system will impose a boil water advisory when there is a concern for the public's health. The associated water purveyor would implement the boil water advisory within their system. The City was not required to implement any boil water advisories in 2023.

4.2.3 Raw Water Samples

The City obtains raw (non-disinfected) water samples from each well site on a semi-annual basis and tests them for organic, inorganic, microorganisms, radionuclides, and physical parameters. The testing laboratory uploads sample results directly to Watertrax, an electronic documenting system used by the City, then City staff posts the results on the City's website for the residents to view.

4.2.4 Sentinel Well Samples

The City obtained groundwater samples from six (6) sentinel (monitoring) wells around PW660 three (3) times in 2023. The intent of the sentinel wells is to aid in the protection of the water quality from potential landward spills or existing areas of contamination. The City samples for physical parameters, dissolved cations, nutrients, anions, microbiological, organics, and radionuclides. This information is available upon request.

4.2.5 Distribution System Samples

The City gathered monthly drinking water samples from each pressure zone and tested them for pH, iron, alkalinity, and hardness. The City's internal laboratory performed the testing and recorded the results in Watertrax. This information is available upon request.

4.2.6 PW621/PW624 Additional Samples

The City of Prince George Wastewater Treatment Centre requires a permit to operate from the Ministry of Environment. The permit identifies the following requirements:

"The Permittee must analyze the unchlorinated water from the College Heights water pumping station three times per week (Monday, Wednesday, and Friday) for Faecal Coliform CFU per mL or MPN per 100 mL. Any positive result must be immediately reported to the Director and the Medical Health Officer for the Northern Interior Health Unit. If a positive result is encountered, daily monitoring (Monday to Friday inclusive) must be carried out until three successive monitoring results show no Faecal Coliforms. All samples results must be submitted together with the monthly sewage analyses and the flow measurement report."

The City met these permit requirements and received zero positive results in 2023.



4.2.7 Turbidity

Turbidity is the measure of relative clarity of a liquid. It is measured by analyzing the amount of light that is scattered by material in the water. The higher the intensity of scattered light, the higher the turbidity, or particles in the water. Particles in the water can harbor microorganisms, protecting them from disinfection. The Guidelines recommend that water entering the distribution system have turbidity levels of 1.0 Nephelometric Turbidity Unit (NTU) or less to ensure effectiveness of disinfection and for good operation of a distribution system.

The City has in-line turbidity monitors located at each supply well. The monitors provide continuous monitoring of the well turbidity levels. City staff perform quality assurance checks and calibrations on the turbidity monitors by comparing the results to hand-held monitors monthly. Turbidity levels leaving each supply well were under 1.0 NTU in 2023.

4.3 Disinfection

The City is required to maintain a minimum free chlorine residual of 0.2 ppm throughout the distribution system, as per the NHA Operating Permit. The City accomplishes this by adding sodium hypochlorite to the water. The sodium hypochlorite is generated on-site at the major groundwater wells (PW601, PW605, and PW660), and transported to the smaller groundwater wells (PW621, PW624, PW652). The free chlorine residuals leaving each well site vary, depending on system demands, from 0.5 ppm to 1.0 ppm. The City uses five (5) booster stations as monitoring and re-injection sites.

City staff utilize continuous free chlorine monitoring equipment throughout the system and perform quality assurance checks by comparing the results to hand-held monitors on a weekly basis. The free chlorine monitoring equipment is connected to the City's SCADA system, which will notify City staff when free chlorine residuals drop below or above the desired amount. Free chlorine residual information is recorded in Watertrax for historical reference. The City tests the free chlorine residual throughout each pressure zone at over 30 locations two times per week to ensure consistency.

The City requires that all new water main installations over four (4) inch in size undertake disinfection in accordance with the American Water Works Association (AWWA) Standard B300 or C651. The City administers this through the Subdivision & Development Servicing Bylaw No. 8618, 2014.

4.4 Cross-Connection Control (CCC) Program

4.4.1 Program Overview

The NHA requires the City to develop and maintain a CCC program. A cross-connection is any actual or potential connection between a potable water supply and any pipe, vessel, tank, plumbing fixture, equipment, or device through which it is possible for used, polluted, or contaminated water or any



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other substance to enter the potable water system. A CCC program is a program designed to administer and regulate the selection, installation, testing and maintenance of *backflow preventers*.

The City administers its CCC program through the following City of Prince George Bylaws:

- *Water Regulation and Rates Bylaw No. 7479, 2003*
- *Building Bylaw No. 8922, 2018*
- *Comprehensive Fees & Charges Bylaw No. 9080, 2019*

The City requires that a Plumbing Permit be obtained for all backflow preventer installations. The device must be installed by a certified Plumber and tested by a certified Backflow Preventer Tester. The backflow preventer is input into the City's backflow preventer database. Annual tests are required on each backflow preventer. The City will notify the property owner one (1) month prior to their re-certification date via mail. If a test report is not received before the re-certification date, two (2) follow-up letters are mailed; one (1) month post, and two (2) months post re-certification date. Penalties for non-compliance with the CCC Program can lead to fines and/or disconnection of the water service.

4.5 Wellhead/Aquifer Protection Program

The City has established a Wellhead/Aquifer Protection Program through the development of several reports, and assessments throughout the Water Distribution System's history.

Some of these reports include:

- 1993, City of Prince George Wilson Park Collector Well No. 3 (PW601) Construction and Testing Report;
- 2002, Capture Zone Analysis and Preliminary Delineation of Well Protection Areas for Wells PW605, PW601, and Fishtrap Island: City of Prince George, BC;
- 2005, Installation Report: Fishtrap Island Collector Well Design and Construction Project;
- 2010, Sentinel Well Construction and Sampling PW660;
- 2010, Flood Risk Evaluation and Flood Control Solutions;
- 2015, City of Prince George Wells Protection Plan: For CN Related Risks;
- 2019, City of Prince George Groundwater at Risk of Containing Pathogens Risk Assessment

As the City obtains new information about the wellhead and aquifer protection areas, the Wellhead/Aquifer Protection Program is updated.

Currently, the City performs the sentinel well, raw water and PW621/PW624 additional sampling, noted in Section 4.2 Water Quality Sampling, as part of this Program. Additionally, there are specific requirements around developing land within the wellhead and aquifer protection areas. City staff monitor the wells on a routine basis to ensure the immediate area is safe.

Future plans include; identify the wellhead/aquifer protection areas with signage, and implement recommendations from the City of Prince George GARP Risk Assessment.

4.6 Water Quality Concerns

The City received 36 concerns from the public regarding the drinking water quality in 2023. The City receives water quality concerns through phone, email, and app inquiries to the City’s Service Centre. Service Centre staff create a Service Request in Cityworks, and dispatch the requests to the Utilities Division. Utilities staff investigate each concern and determine the appropriate path to correct the water quality. The concern and resolution are documented within the Service Request for the associated address. The calls received are typically for dirty water, or undesirable taste and odour. The common causes are water main construction, water main breaks, unidirectional flushing, higher flow output from pumps than normal and undesirable chlorine residual taste.

5.0 Emergency Response Plan

The City has prepared an Emergency Response Plan (Plan) for the City of Prince George Water Distribution System. City staff review the Plan on an annual basis, and update when required. The City updated the Plan in 2022. City staff and the NHA receive the Plan, as it pertains to the operation of the system.

The City communicates emergency response situations through the City of Prince George website.

6.0 Environmental Operators Certification Program (EOCP)

6.1 Classification

The City of Prince George Water Distribution System is classed as a Level IV system. The classification system is from Level I to Level IV, with Level IV being the highest level of classification. This is due to the systems complexity and size.

6.2 Certified Operators

In 2023, the City had the following numbers of EOCP certified Water Distribution staff, excluding management staff:

Classification	2023
Level IV	1
Level III	2
Level II	10
Level I	19
Operator in Training	21



Additionally, the City relies on specialists in their field, such as technology, engineering, electrical and mechanical trades, environmental and administrative staff to ensure a safe and efficient drinking water system.

6.3 Training

The City ensures staff receive training in all health and safety related areas that pertain to their work environment. This includes, but not limited to the following:

- Confined Space Entry
- Fall Protection
- Aerial Work Platform
- Traffic Control
- Arc Flash & Low Voltage
- H2S Alive
- Excavation Safety
- Electrical Safety
- Hoisting, Lifting & Rigging
- Forklift
- Skid Steer
- Bullying & Harassment
- First Aid
- WHMIS
- Due Diligence for Supervisors
- Lockout & Tag Out

7.0 Conclusion

The City of Prince George remains committed to safeguarding the highest quality of water for their residents. Staff are continuously monitoring the system, updating infrastructure, and advancing their knowledge of any changes in regulations, or technology that pertains to the operations and maintenance of the Water Distribution System. The City will continue to be transparent and work with the government agencies, health authority, and citizens to ensure their satisfaction.

For questions or comments regarding the Report, please contact the Utilities Division staff on Page 1.