

EWQA NEWSLETTER

FALL 2024



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Welcome to the Enhanced Water Quality Assurance (EWQA) Newsletter, an e-update to keep Provincial Health Officer (PHO) approved drinking water testing laboratories and partners informed about EWQA activities. Bulletins and updates to the PHO Approved Laboratory List are also published on our [PHSA site](#), so be sure to check it out regularly.

Letter from EWQA Chair

Dear EWQA Community, it's been a while since our last newsletter. I am particularly pleased to have this opportunity to connect with you directly through this newsletter. As Chair of the Enhanced Water Quality Assurance Program (EWQA), it is both an honor and a privilege to share updates, express gratitude, and look ahead to the exciting possibilities that lie before us in our ongoing efforts to ensure water quality across the province.

Acknowledging Our Experienced Auditors

First and foremost, I want to extend my sincerest appreciation to the exceptional team of auditors who continue to be the backbone of the EWQA. It is your dedication, expertise, and unwavering commitment to quality assurance that enables us to maintain the high standards for water safety that define this program. Your years of service and ongoing contribution play a critical role in fostering continuous improvement across our network of accredited laboratories. Thank you for your tireless work and for being the true champions of public health and environmental integrity.

Welcoming New Auditors

To our newest auditors, I extend a special and heartfelt welcome! We are thrilled to have you join the EWQA family. Your fresh perspectives, creative ideas, and enthusiasm will no doubt bring new energy to our work. As we continue to evolve in the dynamic world of environmental testing, I encourage you to engage fully in the initiatives led by our Quality Assurance Advisory Group (QAAG) and Steering Committee. Your input will be invaluable in setting the direction for our shared goals, and I look forward to seeing the impact of your contributions.

Appreciation for Our Partner Laboratories

To our partner laboratories—thank you for your ongoing collaboration and support. The work we do together is fundamental to the success of EWQA, and we deeply value your role in maintaining the highest standards of public safety, environmental stewardship, and scientific integrity. Our partnership is one of mutual respect, and we are proud to work alongside each of you in service of a shared mission: to ensure safe and reliable water quality for all.

Looking Ahead: Strengthening the Program

As we look to the future, EWQA is focused on enhancing teamwork within our auditor group and strengthening our relationships with approved laboratories, field leadership, and health authorities. We are committed to refreshing the program to keep pace with evolving needs and to further solidify our role in the province's water quality assurance efforts.

In the coming months, we will explore the possibility of pursuing ISO accreditation or becoming ILAC (International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation) signatories. This move would allow us to align even more closely with international best practices and further raise the bar for quality and reliability in our work.

At the heart of our mission lies ongoing process improvement, and we remain dedicated to refining our approaches and embracing opportunities that drive excellence. I am confident that, together, we will continue to meet future challenges head-on and seize new opportunities to build on our successes.

Thank you to each one of you for being part of this remarkable journey. Your dedication and hard work are truly what make EWQA a leader in water quality assurance, and I look forward to our continued success and the deepened connection we will share in the months and years ahead.

Best regards,

Dr. Linda Hoang

Chair, Enhanced Water Quality Assurance Program (EWQA) & Medical Director, Public Health Laboratory, PHSA

EWQA History:

EWQA was established in 1987 by BC's Provincial Health Officer (PHO) and BCCDC to inspect and approve drinking water testing labs to support BCCDC contracts with regional private labs, ensure comparable results, and protect public health through microbial quality testing. In 1992, BC Drinking Water Protection Regulation, pursuant to the Health Act included a requirement for water testing to occur in approved laboratories. After seven years, the program was renamed to Enhanced Water Quality Assurance Program (EWQA) under PHO leadership to emphasize quality management and redeveloped with UBC's Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine. In 2008, at UBC's request, EWQA transitioned to the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) under the leadership of the Medical Director of the Public Health Laboratory, with added Lower Mainland Laboratory's Quality Director in 2009.

Present

- Operating Model: Private-public educational partnership based on peer review, with support from experts in environmental microbiology.
- Collaboration: Works closely with PT provider.
- Quality Guidance: Follows ISO 17021 standards for quality management.

EWQA VISION

Supporting safe drinking water, better health

EWQA MISSION

To lead in maintaining international microbiology standards for all British Columbia laboratories testing drinking water under the BC Drinking Water Act, 2003

Join EWQA Auditor Team: Where Quality Meets Assurance!

Are you ready to contribute to the protection of water quality and the advancement of environmental sustainability? At EWQA, we're looking for passionate professionals committed to creating meaningful change and enhancing quality and compliance standards.

Why You Should Join Us as a New Auditor:

- **Collaborative Culture**: Join a team of experienced professionals who value diverse perspectives and innovative solutions.
- **Continuous Growth**: Take advantage of training and development opportunities to enhance your skills and advance your career.
- **Networking Opportunities**: Connect with industry leaders and experts dedicated to making a difference.

Benefits Include:

- Training and Support
- Knowledge Exchange and Experience Sharing
- Professional and Personal Development
- Networking

Ready to Make an Impact?

Join us in our mission to ensure clean and safe water for all. For inquiries or if you are interested in joining our team, please contact the EWQA Coordinator at Caleb.Lee@bccdc.ca Together let's create a healthier tomorrow!

Upcoming Events:

EWQA auditors, we will be kicking off the new year with Health and Wellness Webinars starting in January 2025! More details to follow.

In our next newsletter we will highlight our annual workshop with this year's theme focusing on Relationship Building and People Skills.