

Ministry of  
Healthy Living and Sport



# Air Quality and Public Health: A Fresh Look

***Clean Air Forum  
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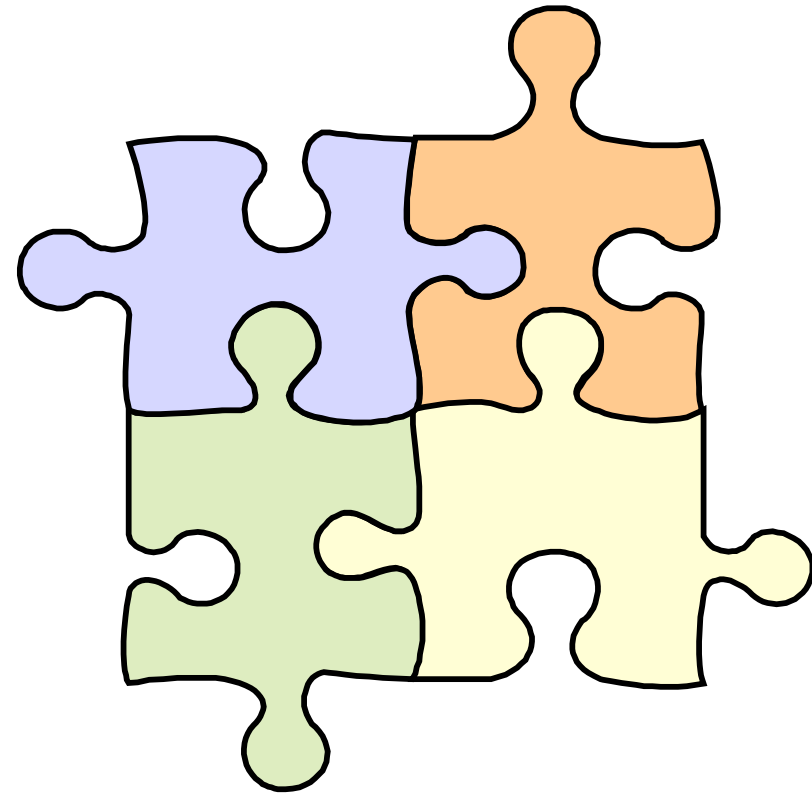


# The New BC Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport

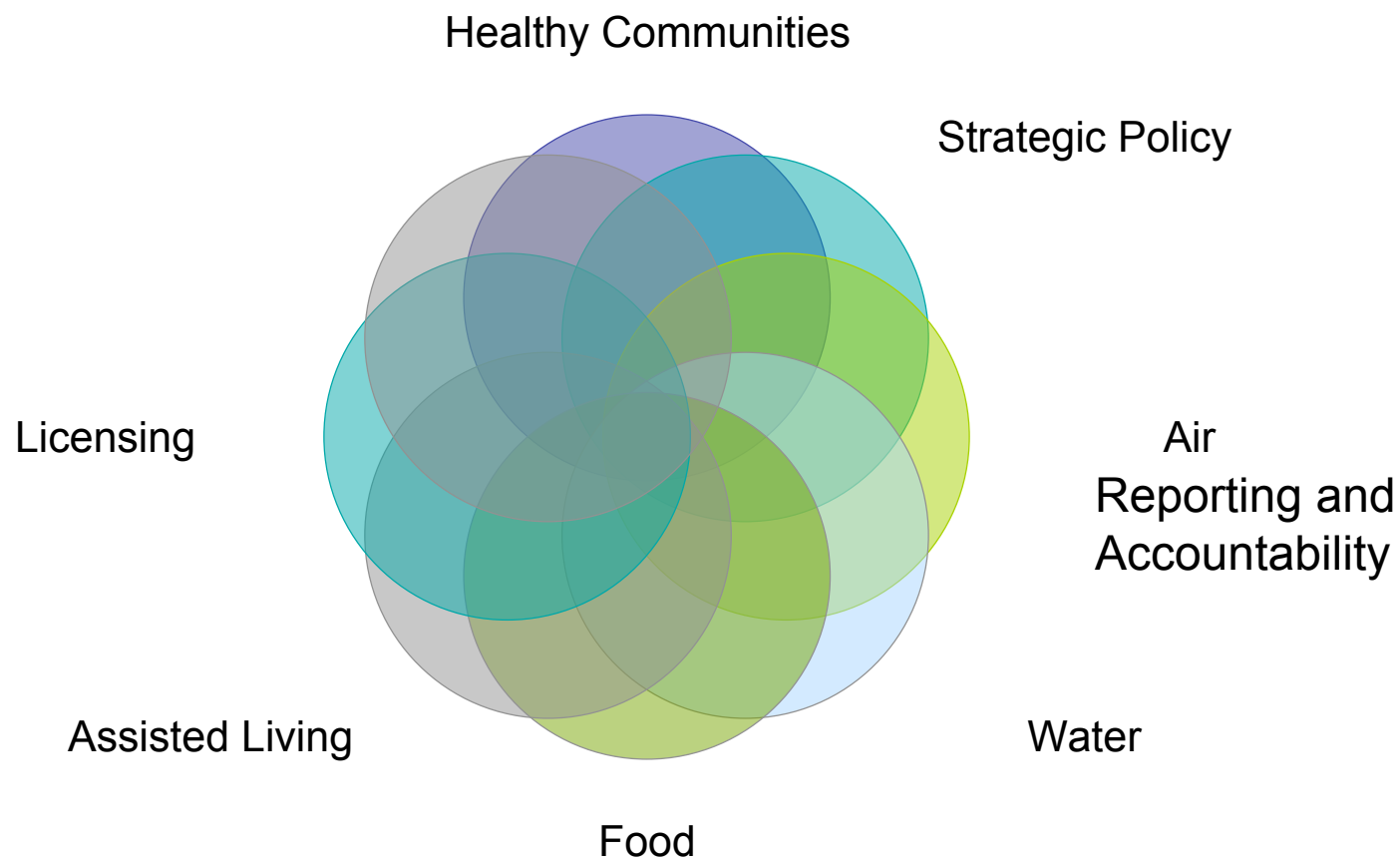
- Innovative structure to support healthy communities
- Creation of a new Health Protection Branch
  - Adding some staff and functions from Ministry of Environment in the areas of air and water quality to traditional public health protection
  - Better exploration of the connections between environmental changes and health impacts to support policy and program development
  - Opportunity to build on knowledge as a shared resource



## Not Composed of Autonomous Mutually Exclusive Parts



# Health Protection





## New Water and Air Mandate:

- Assess effectiveness and efficiency of current policies and services
- Develop new policies
- Set standards
- Public reporting on air & water quality
- Support for air and water shed planning



## Communication/Public Reporting

### Three Broad Streams:

- Living web page
  - public knowledge, observations, and feedback
- Regional Information delivery
  - local knowledge, data, management info
- Roll-up in annual Provincial Health Officers' Report



## Core Programs in Public Health

- An initiative to support high quality public health services throughout BC
- Review evidence and best practices from around the world to inform the development of Model Programs
- Informs and supports plans and activities of the Ministry, Health Authorities
- 21 programs in development
- Air Quality is one of these

## History and Challenges

- Air quality issues covered as one of the “general hazards”
- In the context of busy public health units AQ activities largely based on response to complaints
- In some regions much more active programs of research and action – but variable around the province
- Little reliable information available to support local activities
- Ongoing challenges in maintaining collaborative working relationships at all levels in a complex system

# Air Quality Core Programs

## Indoor and Outdoor Air – Main Program Components

- The surveillance and monitoring of air quality, including trend analysis and assessment of public health reports.
- Identifying, with partners as appropriate, key air pollutants and sources (including new products), and assessing/prioritizing their public health impact.
- Identifying and implementing, with partners, effective interventions.
- Educational and awareness initiatives.



## What this means for communities

- A confirmation of the importance of air quality improvement in health improvement
- Support for local health authorities to build specific consideration of air quality and its impact on health into the planning for public health activities
- Better coordination and sharing of information throughout the system

...a shift to a more systematic and proactive approach

## Air Quality BC Website

- A one-stop shop for air quality information
- Collaboration between MoE and MHLS
- New and restructured static content
- Updated look and feel
- Up-to-date air quality advisory information
- Accessible historical air quality data
- Improved access to air quality reports
- Real-time, map-based air quality data incorporating both raw parameters and the Air Quality Health Index.

# Updated look and feel

This screenshot shows the old website layout for the Environmental Protection Division. It features a dark header with the division's name and logo. The main content area is divided into a left sidebar with a 'Contents' menu and a main right section titled 'Environmental Quality Branch'. The sidebar lists various topics like 'Air Protection', 'Water', and 'Waste'. The main section contains text about the 'B.C. Air Action Plan' and 'idle-free' ambassadors, accompanied by a small photo of a couple. The overall design is cluttered and text-heavy.



This screenshot shows the new website layout for AirQuality BC. It features a clean, modern design with a blue and green color scheme. The header includes the British Columbia logo and a search bar. The main content area is titled 'AirQuality BC' and features a large banner image of a couple. The layout is organized into sections: 'B.C. Home' with a list of links, 'B.C. Air Action Plan' with a detailed description and a photo of a couple, 'Take Action' with a call to action for the 'idle-free' program, and 'Stop smoking out your neighbours!' with a photo of a wood stove. The right sidebar contains 'Air Quality Advisories', 'What's the air like today?' with a map, and 'Historical air quality data' with a line graph. The footer includes copyright, disclaimer, privacy, and accessibility links.

# Updated interface for real-time data

The screenshot displays the AirQuality BC website interface. At the top left is the British Columbia logo with the tagline 'The Best Place on Earth'. A search bar is located at the top center, and navigation links for 'Advanced Search', 'Help', 'Contact Us', and 'Text Size' are on the top right. Below the search bar, there are radio buttons for 'All B.C. Government' and 'Air Quality BC', along with a 'B.C. Home' link and a 'Printer Version' icon.

The main header features the 'AirQuality BC' logo and a navigation bar with links for 'Resources for: Communities, Researchers and Scientists, Industry, Teachers and Youth'. Below this, a section titled 'What's the air like today in B.C.?' provides introductory text about air quality measurement and the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI). It includes a legend and instructions on how to use the map to view detailed data for specific communities.

The central focus is the 'Current Air Quality in British Columbia' section, which includes a map of the province and a table of 'Current Air Quality Health Index Readings' as of 10:45am on Jan 24, 2009. The map shows various locations with colored circles indicating their AQHI status. The table lists 14 locations with their corresponding AQHI values and categories (Low or Moderate).

Below the table, there is a link to 'click on a station above for more details' and a smaller map titled 'Metro Vancouver and the Lower Fraser Valley' showing specific monitoring stations. At the bottom of the main content area, there is a link to 'View the data in xml/ksl format'.

The left sidebar contains a 'B.C. Home' section with links to 'What's the Air Like Today?', 'What's New?', 'Air Quality FAQs', 'Questions, Comments & Complaints', and 'A - Z Index'. Below this are sections for 'Air Quality 101', 'B.C.'s Air Quality Readings', 'B.C.'s Plans for Improving Air Quality', 'Air and Airsheds in B.C.', 'Air Quality and Your Health', 'Air Quality Issues', 'Air Quality and Climate Change', 'Reports and Publications', 'Assessing Air Quality', and 'Air Quality Regulatory Frameworks'. The 'Resources' section includes links to a 'Glossary of Terms' and 'Print and Multimedia Resources'. The 'Government' section provides quick access to information based on the government's structure, with links to 'B.C. Government', 'Ministries and Organizations', and 'Other Levels of Government'.

At the bottom of the page, there are links for 'COPYRIGHT', 'DISCLAIMER', 'PRIVACY', and 'ACCESSIBILITY'.

Location	AQHI Value	Category
Central Okanagan	2	Low
Kamloops	4	Moderate
Nanaimo	2	Low
North Okanagan	2	Low
Prince George	4	Moderate
Quesnel	3	Low
South Okanagan	2	Low
Victoria	2	Low
Central Fraser Valley	3	Low
Eastern Fraser Valley	3	Low
Metro Vancouver NE	3	Low
Metro Vancouver NW	3	Low
Metro Vancouver SE	3	Low
Metro Vancouver SW	3	Low



## Contacts and links:

<http://www.phabc.org/> - for further public health core programs information

[www.bcairquality.ca](http://www.bcairquality.ca)

<http://www.bc.lung.ca/airquality/>