

# DIRECTIVE

## 2014-01 3rd Update

October 28, 2014



### 3rd UPDATE - Short-Term Water Use Suspension Ends in Parts of Northeast B.C.

**To:** Industry

**Effective Date:** Immediately

#### **Latest Requirement:**

Water withdrawals by the oil and gas industry are no longer suspended for many rivers, creeks, streams and lakes in northeast B.C. Suspensions had been in place since the summer for short-term water use approved by the BC Oil and Gas Commission (Commission).

The suspension is ENDED for all rivers and lakes in the following basins:

- Peace River (except Moberly River)
- Sikanni Chief River
- Muskwa River
- Fontas River
- Prophet River

In addition, withdrawal of water from the following sources is not suspended:

- Fort Nelson River mainstem
- Liard River mainstem
- Water source dugouts

Note the following exceptions. The suspension REMAINS IN PLACE:

- for the Moberly River
- for rivers and lakes in the Liard River basin (except as noted above)

A map showing all watersheds now under suspension is attached.

#### **New Applications for Water Use in Suspended Areas:**

Given local variability, it is possible that some streams in the areas remaining under suspension will have recovered sufficiently to allow some water withdrawal. The Commission will review new applications for short term water use, or requests to use existing approvals, on a site-specific basis.

Operators are requested to do the following to support their application or request to use an existing Section 8 approval:

1. Limit the application to water volumes and points of diversion that are realistic to the specific operational needs for the upcoming winter and spring.
2. For new applications for short-term use approvals for water from rivers and streams, or request use of existing approvals, provide a good discharge measurement at the point(s) of diversion, to provide information on current flow conditions in relation to the volume of water requested.

The discharge measurement will be collected to an acceptable hydrometric standard by a qualified individual.

3. For new applications for short-term use approvals for water from lakes, or reactivation of existing approvals, provide information on lake bathymetry:
  - Surface area (hectares)
  - Depth (metres). If lake depth information is not already available (such as from provincial databases or previous surveys), obtain depth measurements at points along two transects representing the long and short lake axes, to determine maximum lake depth
  - Volume (cubic metres)
4. Basin Section 8 approvals for such things as geophysical exploration and other small and dispersed uses will not require field measurements.

**Background:**

The Commission closely monitors stream flow and water levels and makes changes to permitted uses as conditions change.

Weather patterns changed in late October, bringing rain and snow to the northeast. Fort St. John has recorded 44 mm of precipitation in October to date, with 24 mm of that occurring over the last three days. Fort Nelson recorded 39 mm of precipitation, but with only light precipitation in recent days. Many rivers have been rising gradually.

The Commission has reviewed all available hydrometric data from the Water Survey of Canada current to today to assess flow conditions. Many gauged rivers have risen over the last week; however, some areas still remain well below normal for the date (e.g., Moberly River and streams near Fort Nelson).

Earlier this year, the Commission suspended short-term water withdrawals by the oil and gas industry due to low stream flows in order to protect fish and aquatic resources and community water supply. The Commission issued [Directive 2014-01](#) on July 28, suspending some short-term water withdrawals by the oil and gas industry in northeast B.C. due to drought conditions. On Aug. 8, the Commission issued an [Expanded Directive](#) to include additional basins within the Peace River watershed, and on Aug. 21, virtually all basins were affected in [Update 2](#).

Should you have any questions regarding this Directive Update, please contact:

Allan Chapman, Hydrologist  
Resource Stewardship and Major Projects Division  
[Allan.Chapman@bcogc.ca](mailto:Allan.Chapman@bcogc.ca)  
250-419-4435



