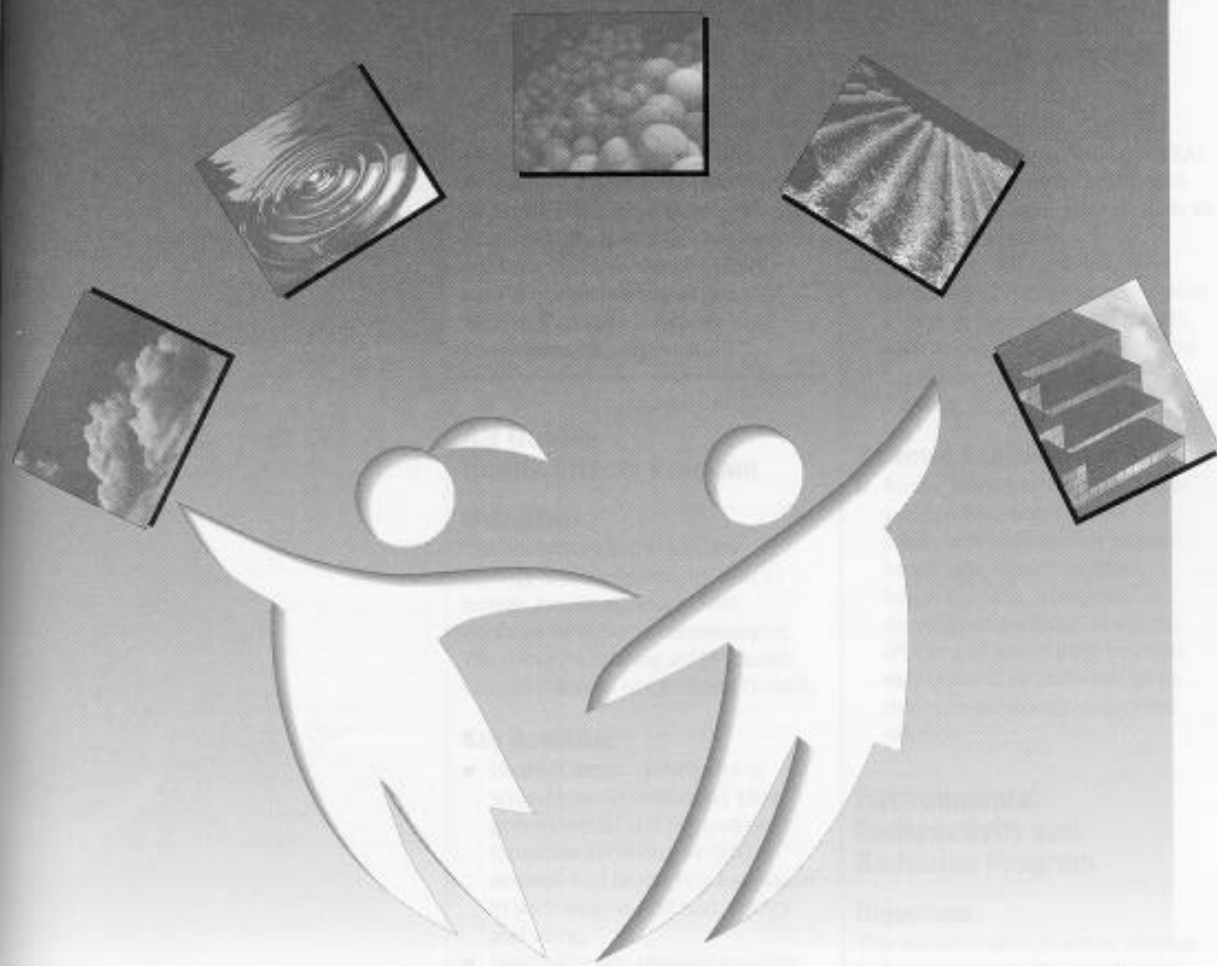


# Appendix



- The Environmental Sustainability and Resource Program (ESRP) is a key component of the Government of Canada's commitment to sustainable development.
- The ESRP is a multi-departmental program that focuses on the environmental impacts of government activities.

## Objectives

The ESRP aims to ensure that government activities are sustainable and that the environment is protected and enhanced. The program also aims to promote sustainable development and to ensure that government activities are consistent with the principles of sustainable development.

## HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMS

*Unless otherwise noted, all programs described below helped to further the objectives of Health Canada's Action Plan on Health and the Environment (APHE) and are continuing as part of Health Canada's Health and Environment program.*

### Air Quality Health Effects Program

#### Objectives

This initiative aims to identify, manage and communicate risks to human health associated with exposure to airborne contaminants. The initiative is being led by Health Canada's Bureau of Chemical Hazards.

#### Key Activities

- Health Canada participates in several interdepartmental, inter-governmental and international initiatives involving air quality research and health risk assessment in such areas as acid rain, energy and smog.
- Health Canada provides scientific data and advice to Environment Canada on the health effects of numerous air pollutants.
- Health Canada is involved in the development of air quality

guidelines under the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* (CEPA) and assists provincial health and environment agencies with their air pollution programs.

- Health Canada provides expert advice on air quality issues to other federal government departments, such as Labour Canada, Transport Canada and Natural Resources Canada.

#### Selected Achievements

- Recent studies by Health Canada and Environment Canada researchers indicate that adverse health effects, such as death, hospitalization, emergency department visits due to asthma attacks and loss of lung function, may occur at air pollution levels that were previously considered risk-free.

### Environmental Radioactivity and Radiation Program

#### Objectives

This initiative aims to assess, manage and communicate the health risks associated with facilities such as nuclear reactors and electrical power lines and with environmental factors such as noise, ultraviolet (UV)

radiation and natural radioactivity. Health Canada's Radiation Protection Bureau is responsible for protecting Canadians from the hazards posed by natural and artificial sources of ionizing and non-ionizing radiation and is responsible for this initiative.

### Key Activities

- Health Canada investigates and manages health risks under the *Department of Health Act* (formerly the *Department of National Health and Welfare Act*), sets standards and guidelines under the *Canada Labour Code*, Occupational Safety and Health Standards and federal/provincial arrangements, assesses industrial developments under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* and regulates products under the *Radiation Emitting Devices Act*.
- In 1984, the Federal Nuclear Emergency Plan was developed to help the Minister of Health respond to peacetime nuclear emergencies occurring at home or abroad. Its goal is to protect the public from immediate and delayed health effects caused by exposure to uncontrolled sources of radiation and to reduce the environmental impacts of a nuclear emergency. Health Canada is the lead federal agency under the Federal Nuclear Emergency Plan.
- The National Radioactivity Monitoring Network assesses and manages the health effects of radioactivity in the environment, including accidents affecting Canada.
- The National Calibration Reference Centres for Bioassay and In Vivo Monitoring program measure internally deposited radioactivity through traceable quality assurance programs to reduce health risks and psychological stress in workers and the public.
- Health Canada is currently investigating the biological effects of non-ionizing radiation, including environmental noise, electromagnetic fields associated

with power lines and cellular telephones and UV radiation.

## Drinking Water Safety Initiative

### Objectives

This initiative aims to identify hazards, estimate exposures and assess, manage and communicate the health risks associated with radiological, microbiological and chemical water-borne contaminants, in collaboration with provincial departments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Health Canada's Bureau of Chemical Hazards, Radiation Protection Bureau and Medical Services Branch participate in this initiative.

### Key Activities

- The Bureau of Chemical Hazards, in partnership with the provinces and territories, develops national water quality guidelines and emergency health advisories for drinking water and recreational waters. The guidelines are used by the provinces and territories to establish legally enforceable standards and are referenced in federal legislation, such as the *Canada Labour Code*, and policies.
- Health Canada conducts research on a broad range of water quality issues, such as water-borne infectious diseases, cyanobacterial neurotoxins and the health effects associated with disinfection by-products, uranium, arsenic and volatile organic compounds, among others.
- Health Canada conducts national surveys of water-borne contaminants.
- Health Canada has drafted a *Drinking Water Materials Safety Act*, which aims to ensure that Canadians continue to receive the benefits of high-quality drinking water. In essence, the proposed legislation mandates the currently voluntary certification process for materials used in the production and distribution of drinking water.

- The Medical Services Branch helps First Nations communities identify and remedy potential water quality problems through sampling and analysis of chemical contaminants, the establishment of community-based water quality laboratories, a training program for First Nations water treatment plant operators and expert advice.

### Selected Achievements

Under this initiative, Health Canada:

- published the sixth edition of the *Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality*;
- completed a national drinking water survey of 53 Canadian cities;
- developed analytical methods for "free" aluminum and bromate determinations; and
- developed an Internet site on the Drinking Water Program for Health Canada's web site.

*Bill C-76* (the *Drinking Water Materials Safety Act*) was introduced in the House of Commons on December 11, 1996. The Bill is intended to provide authority to regulate drinking water materials, using consensus health standards and third-party certification. The Bill was awaiting a second reading when Parliament was dissolved on April 27, 1996.

## Bottled Water Program

### Objectives

This initiative aims to ensure the safety of bottled drinking water sold in Canada through the revision of chemical, microbiological and labelling requirements for these products. Bottled water is regulated as a food. The Food Directorate of Health Canada is responsible for setting regulations and standards pertaining to bottled water, while the Canadian Food Inspection Agency is involved with surveillance and compliance activities.

## Key Activities

- Health Canada is currently reviewing existing regulations for pre-packaged water and ice, with an emphasis on revising the criteria for microbiological quality and specifying the limits for natural and synthetic chemical contaminants. Where appropriate, these limits will be harmonized with current drinking water quality guidelines.

## Selected Achievements

- A survey of commercial bottled water from across Canada was recently conducted. Analyses were conducted for a variety of volatile organic compounds and inorganic compounds, such as heavy metals.<sup>590,591</sup> Microbiological assessments were also carried out.

## Great Lakes Health Effects Program

### Objectives

This initiative aims to identify health problems related to environmental pollution in the nine million Canadians living around the Great Lakes, advise residents on ways to avoid exposure to environmental contaminants and help governmental and non-governmental partners reduce pollution in the region. This initiative is part of the Great Lakes 2000 Program, a multi-agency federal/provincial effort to clean up the Great Lakes and protect human health.

### Key Activities

- Health Canada collaborates with other federal departments, provincial ministries, universities, public health units, health professionals, teachers, industry, environmental NGOs and Great Lakes communities to identify, assess, manage and communicate health risks in the area.
- Current research includes assessments of population exposures to Great Lakes contaminants; studies of risks and benefits related to the consumption of Great Lakes fish;

and studies on the relationship between exposure to environmental contaminants and reproduction, breast cancer and endometriosis.

- Health Canada is collaborating with international agencies to reduce the long-range transport of toxic chemicals into the Great Lakes basin.

## Selected Achievements

- Health Canada has produced handbooks for community-directed health and environment studies, as well as a health and environment handbook for health professionals. The Department has also produced research summaries on health and air pollution, health and Great Lakes fish consumption and health and drinking water disinfection by-products.
- Health Canada has produced atlases showing the incidence of birth defects, cancer rates and overall death rates in the Great Lakes basin.

## Volet Santé of the St. Lawrence Vision 2000 Program

### Objectives

This initiative aims to identify and manage the health risks associated with exposure to pollutants in the St. Lawrence River. The initiative is part of the St. Lawrence Vision 2000 Program, which involves 10 federal departments and the Quebec government. Health Canada and the Quebec Ministry of Health and Social Services are jointly responsible for implementing the *Volet Santé*.

### Key Activities

- Current research concerns include contaminant levels in human tissues; genotoxic biomarkers in newborns; infertility in men and women; behavioural effects in children; immunological effects of St. Lawrence contaminants; absorption of trihalomethanes (THMs) during showering and

bathing; water-borne disease incidence; and cancer incidence in children.

## Total Diet Program (Market Basket Survey)

### Objectives

The Total Diet Program or Market Basket Survey is designed to assess, monitor and manage the human health risks resulting from exposure to contaminants in food. Data on the quality and safety of our food supply are used to estimate the intake levels of specific chemicals by Canadians. The program's regulatory authority is derived from the *Food and Drugs Act and Regulations*. Health Canada's Food Directorate is responsible for this initiative.

### Key Activities

- Results from the Market Basket Survey support risk assessment and management activities conducted under the *Food and Drugs Act and Regulations*. The results are also used to assess the health risks of priority substances under CEPA. Data generated by the Market Basket Survey serve as an indicator for remedial action by Health Canada, in cases where food contaminants exceed acceptable levels and pose an increased risk to human health.

## Selected Achievements

- During the most recent Market Basket Survey (1992-1996), food samples representative of more than 99% of the diet were collected from six urban centres from across Canada. Analyses for a host of potentially toxic chemicals, including polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), dioxins, pesticides and heavy metals, were conducted. Data on PCB concentrations have been published, and the remainder are under evaluation.

## Effects on Aboriginals from the Great Lakes Environment (EAGLE) Project

### Objectives

This initiative aims to blend the traditional knowledge of First Nations people with scientific methodology to understand and document the effects of environmental contaminants on health and well-being. To accomplish this goal, the EAGLE Project takes a broad and comprehensive view of health, examining effects on both physical health and the traditional way of life and resulting socio-cultural well-being. The project is a joint initiative of Health Canada, the Assembly of First Nations and First Nations communities in the Great Lakes basin. The project received funding under APHE and is continuing as part of the ongoing activities of Health Canada's Medical Services Branch. Although not formally part of Health Canada's Health and Environment program, it shares similar goals.

### Key Activities

- Health Canada and its partners are studying the levels of contaminants in fish and wild game consumed by First Nations people and have developed community-specific fish consumption guidelines, in collaboration with the Ontario Ministry of Environment and Energy.
- Health Canada and its partners are analysing human blood and hair samples to determine levels of PCBs, organochlorines and mercury.
- Health Canada and its partners are assessing the health status of First Nations communities and its relation to environmental quality.
- EAGLE Project participants are examining how environmental contaminants have affected the traditional way of life of First Nations communities.
- EAGLE Project participants are using a geographical information system to display and analyse traditional knowledge and scientific

information on the health of First Nations people and the environment.

### Selected Achievements

- EAGLE Project participants have developed one of the largest databases in North America on the consumption of traditional/country foods by First Nations people. The database contains detailed information on the different species of freshwater fish and wild game consumed, the size and number of meals and hunting and fishing locations.

## Northern and Arctic Pollution Initiative

### Objectives

This initiative aims to reduce or eliminate the risks to the health of northern Canadians, Aboriginals and Inuit from contaminants in food and the environment. The initiative works in partnership with the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy, an international program to monitor and assess the impact of contaminants in the Arctic environment. The project received funding under APHE and is continuing as part of the ongoing activities of Health Canada's Medical Services Branch. Although not formally part of Health Canada's Health and Environment program, it shares similar goals.

### Key Activities

- Health Canada works with other federal, provincial and territorial government agencies, as well as First Nations communities, to provide timely, responsive and evidence-based advice on environmental health issues of concern to northerners, Aboriginals and Inuit.
- Health Canada conducts research on the health effects of key contaminants, collects information on contaminant levels in foods and the environment and provides funding for sampling and analyses, where information gaps exist.

- The Department assists in the collection and analysis of human milk, maternal and cord blood and hair samples to estimate actual levels of exposure to certain environmental contaminants, and it conducts health risk assessments for northern and Arctic communities.
- Health Canada contributes to national and international initiatives to assess the impact of pollutants on northern residents and is working to eliminate these risks through national and international action.

### Selected Achievements

- The Food Directorate has performed approximately 50 health hazard assessments specifically related to northern foods. Recently, a large assessment was completed dealing with contaminants in waterfowl harvested during 1988–1995 from the Northwest Territories. Additional ongoing, funded or completed projects include development of reference databases for contaminant levels in country foods, dietary surveys in various northern communities and an assessment of trends in levels of contaminants in humans (blood, hair, breast milk) in the Northwest Territories.
- Toxicology studies have been designed to update or establish tolerable daily intake (TDI) values for key contaminants. These will contribute substantially to the risk estimation and health hazard questions raised by the recent food sampling programs. Current studies include those on toxaphene and the chlordane-related contaminants, *cis*- and *trans*-nonachlor and oxychlordane.
- Funding was provided for initiation of a comprehensive human blood monitoring program in northern Quebec. This served as a basis for the design and initiation of a similar program in the Northwest Territories. Funding was also provided for risk assessment



workshops and initiation of a research project on the effects of food-borne contaminants on the health of the Aboriginal inhabitants of northern Quebec.

## Environment-Related Disease Surveillance Program

### Objectives

This initiative aims to develop and apply national surveillance systems to assess and manage environmental risks for cancer and asthma. Health Canada's Laboratory Centre for Disease Control (LCDC) is responsible for the initiative.

### Key Activities

- Health Canada identifies and monitors risk factors and conditions of risk for cancer and asthma.
- Health Canada evaluates specific environmental concerns and collaborates with municipal health authorities to address local environmental hot spots.
- Health Canada plans and implements asthma control strategies.
- Health Canada communicates information and findings on environmental risk factors and conditions of risk to communities, health organizations and health care providers.

### Selected Achievements

- Continuing surveillance by Health Canada has revealed that hospital separation rates due to asthma (i.e. the number of discharges from hospital, which reflects the number of hospitalizations due to asthma) have increased from the 1970s. In the group between 0 and 34 years of age, the hospital separation rates increased from the 1970s to the late 1980s and have since stabilized. The greatest increase in hospital separation rates is observed in children 0–4 years of age. Age-standardized mortality rates for asthma decreased from the 1960s to the mid-1970s, then increased to

the mid-1980s, with a decline occurring in the late 1980s.

- Health Canada has developed one of the most powerful databases in the world for determining the underlying causes of cancer and asthma and the causes of local elevations of disease. This provides more options for addressing environmentally mediated health risks.

## Pregnancy and Child Development Program

### Objectives

This initiative aims to determine the impact of environmental hazards on pregnancy, birth outcome and infant and child health. Health Canada's LCDC is responsible for the initiative.

### Key Activities

- Health Canada is studying the relationship between environmental risk factors—including tobacco smoke and pesticides—and birth outcomes, maternal health and infant health.
- Health Canada has established a national surveillance system on pregnancy, birth and infant death. This surveillance contributes to ongoing efforts to prevent neural tube birth defects.

## Active Living and the Environment Program

### Objectives

This initiative encourages Canadians to engage in healthier, more active and more environmentally responsible outdoor physical activities and to enhance their collective capacity to preserve or create quality environments for active living. The Active Living and the Environment Program (ALEP) also encourages Canadians to address environmentally based health risks, such as UV radiation, pesticides, recreational water pollution and air pollution. The program is a partnership linking Health Canada, provincial and territorial governments, municipal governments, voluntary

organizations and the private sector. ALEP, as funded through APHE, ended on March 31, 1997; however, as a result of the Department's renewed emphasis on fitness/active living, high-priority initiatives to promote active transportation and safe, healthy environments for active living continue.

### Key Activities

- Health Canada and its ALEP partners developed and promoted active transportation (e.g. walking, cycling) as an alternative and sustainable mode of transportation, provided funding assistance for community initiatives, promoted naturalization among home gardeners and land managers, promoted sun safety messages and facilitated electronic networking and information sharing.

### Selected Achievements

- ALEP has supported more than 1000 community projects, including 250 active transportation initiatives.
- Through ALEP and the Healthy Environment Program (see below), improvements have been reported in physical and social environments in over 1000 communities in Canada.
- ALEP has fostered a network of 500 provincial and community organizations, as well as inter-sectoral partnerships linking environmental, transportation, urban planning, tourism, parks, natural resources and recreation organizations, in both the public and private sectors.
- Under ALEP, more than 140 communities have been recognized for their work on active living and the environment through the Elaine Burke Recognition Award, which is administered through the *Go for Green!* program.

- Health Canada has worked with more than 50 agencies, federal departments, national organizations and other key partners on environmental health initiatives involving transportation, tourism and recreation, education and urban planning.

## Healthy Environment Program

### Objectives

This initiative supported projects that contribute to the development of healthy working and living environments for Canadians. The program aimed to increase awareness of health and environmental issues, encourage Canadians to create healthier environments, give people the skills and knowledge they need to live healthy lives and create partnerships and collaboration within Canadian society on health and environmental issues. The initiative received funding under APHE and has been replaced by the Community Action and Systems Development and Social Marketing and Partnership Development initiatives (see below), which are part of Health Canada's Health and Environment program.

### Key Activities

Under this program, Health Canada supported funding for:

- public awareness, education and training projects to improve understanding of the link between health and the environment;
- demonstration projects to develop and test new approaches to the building and maintenance of healthy environments; and
- resource development projects for the production and distribution of promotional, educational and information materials on health issues.

### Selected Achievements

- A variety of tools have been produced to help create awareness and promote the involvement of individual Canadians in the

development of a healthy environment, including workshops, guide books, surveys, videos, public awareness campaigns and a software program.

- Through this program and ALEP, improvements have been reported in physical and social environments in over 1000 communities in Canada.
- Health Canada has worked with more than 50 federal departments, national organizations and other key partners on environmental health initiatives involving transportation, tourism and recreation, education and urban planning.

## Community Action and Systems Development

### Objectives

This initiative aims to catalyse and foster community action and the further development of systems and systems capacity for improving environmental conditions to enhance population health. This new initiative is part of Health Canada's Health and Environment program.

### Key Activities

- Health Canada's Health Promotion and Programs Branch works with a variety of federal, provincial and territorial government departments, municipalities, NGOs, schools and corporate partners to educate community leaders, exchange information and develop policies on environmental health issues.

## Social Marketing and Partnership Development

### Objectives

This initiative aims to increase public awareness, understanding and action on issues relating to health and the environment. This new initiative is part of Health Canada's Health and Environment program.

## Key Activities

- Health Canada participates in the C.A.N. DO (The Movement for Clean Air Now) campaign, a multisectoral partnership linking the Canadian Lung Association, federal government departments, NGOs and the private sector. C.A.N. DO is designed to help Canadians improve air quality at home and in the workplace.
- Health Canada participates in the "Healthy Environment Program," which runs on the Weather Network/Météomédia channel. Sponsored by the private sector and federal government, the program gives a human health perspective to daily environmental issues, such as ground-level ozone, ozone depletion, biological contaminants and UV radiation.

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***In addition to the programs noted above, Health Canada undertakes initiatives related to health and the environment as a result of the following legislation:***

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## Canadian Environmental Protection Act

### Objectives

CEPA aims to protect human health and the environment by preventing or reducing the health risks associated with toxic substances in the environment, including commercial chemicals, industrial effluents and emissions and biotechnology products. CEPA is also designed to control the entry into Canada of new substances that may adversely affect human health or the environment. Health Canada and Environment Canada share responsibility for the implementation of CEPA.

### Key Activities

- Health Canada evaluates the health risks of priority substances in the Canadian environment and assesses the potential health risks of new substances, which include chemicals, polymers and biotechnology products.

- Health Canada participates in the Strategic Options Process, a consultative process managed by Environment Canada that includes stakeholders from federal and provincial government agencies, industry and NGOs. The Strategic Options Process is designed to generate risk management strategies to control substances considered toxic to human health or the environment, as defined by CEPA.

### Selected Achievements

- In February 1994, Health Canada completed the assessment of 44 substances on the first Priority Substances List (PSL I). Risk management strategies for 26 substances deemed toxic under CEPA either have been implemented or are now being developed.
- In December 1995, Health Canada began the assessment of 25 substances on the second Priority Substances List (PSL II).
- Since July 1994, Health Canada has completed the assessment of more than 700 new substances and 1200 transitional substances that are subject to the *New Substances Notification Regulations* of CEPA (5000 such substances were introduced into Canadian markets between 1987 and 1994).

## Canadian Environmental Assessment Act

### Objectives

The *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* (CEAA) became law in January 1995, replacing the 1984 *Environmental Assessment and Review Process Guidelines Order*. CEAA requires federal departments and agencies to assess the environmental implications of projects for which they have decision-making authority, whether as proponents, land administrators, funding sources or regulators. Under the Act, Health Canada has two major responsibilities:

- to ensure that for all Health Canada projects, environmental assessments are conducted as early as possible and before irrevocable decisions are made; and
- upon request, to provide departmental specialist/expert information or knowledge to other federal departments, public review panels or mediators conducting environmental assessments.

Within Health Canada, CEAA activities are conducted by the Office of Environmental Health Assessment and by regional CEAA co-ordinators.

### Key Activities

- Each year, Health Canada technical experts review approximately 100 environmental assessment reports, including screenings, comprehensive studies and review panels. They identify hazards and their corresponding risks, rate the risks, propose mitigative measures for risks deemed significant and determine the need for follow-up monitoring.

## Pest Control Products Act and Regulations

### Objectives

The *Pest Control Products Act and Regulations* are the principal federal legislation for the control of pesticides in Canada, including herbicides, insecticides and fungicides. Any pesticide imported, sold or used in Canada must first be registered under the Act, which is administered and enforced by the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) of Health Canada.

### Key Activities

- The PMRA conducts premarket assessments of new pest control products to determine whether the associated health and environmental risks are acceptable and whether the products serve a useful purpose. The Agency also conducts reviews of registered pest control products, based on new information or scientific knowledge. If the risks or value is no longer acceptable, the registration may be amended or cancelled.



## GLOSSARY<sup>1</sup>

*Acceptable daily intake (ADI)*: the amount of a substance that individuals can take in every day over their entire lifetime without an appreciable **risk** to their health, on the basis of all known facts. The ADI is usually expressed in milligrams of chemical per kilogram of body weight per day (mg/kg-bw per day). This term is usually reserved for substances intentionally added to or naturally present in foods (e.g. essential trace elements, **food additives**, etc.). The term *tolerable daily intake (TDI)* is usually used with **contaminants**.

*Acceptable risk*: a **risk** that is so small, whose consequences are so slight or whose associated benefits (perceived or real) are so great that individuals in society are willing to subject themselves to it.

*Activated carbon*: a powdered, granular or pelleted form of porous carbon characterized by a very large surface area per unit volume.

*Acute exposure*: short-term **exposure** to high levels of a substance.

*Aldrin*: an insecticide once used around the world to control soil insects and mosquitoes. Both aldrin and its close relative *dieldrin* are no longer manufactured or used in Canada.

*Algal toxin*: a toxin produced by microscopic marine algae. When algae are consumed by shellfish and other marine life, the toxin accumulates in the tissues of these organisms (i.e. it moves up the **food chain**).

*Allergen*: any foreign substance, such as mould, pollen or animal dander (tiny particles of skin and hair), that triggers an inappropriate immune response—i.e. an allergic reaction—in the human body.

*Ambient air*: outdoor air.

*Anticarcinogen*: a substance that appears to reverse or inhibit the development of cancer.

*Atmosphere*: the entire mass of air surrounding the Earth.

*Atmospheric deposition*: the transfer of airborne **contaminants** to land or water.

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1. Words in boldface type are defined elsewhere in the Glossary.

*Becquerel*: the unit of measure of the strength or activity of a radioactive substance, representing one disintegration per second of the radioactive element(s) in the substance.

*Bioaccumulation*: the process in which a chemical accumulates to levels higher than those in the original medium. For example, seals retain in their fat a higher concentration of fat-soluble chemicals absorbed from their fish diet than existed in the fish. This can be compared with *biomagnification*, which is the cumulative increase in the concentration of a chemical as one moves up the **food chain**.

*Biological agent*: a living organism or its by-products, such as bacteria, **protozoa**, viruses, fungi and algae, as well as the toxins these organisms produce.

*Bioremediation*: the process of cleaning up contaminated soil or water using **micro-organisms**.

*Biotechnology*: the use of living organisms or parts of living organisms—such as bacteria, plant cells and animal cells—in agriculture, forestry, mining and other industries (e.g. production of **natural pesticides**, fermentation processes in food manufacturing).

*Botulism*: food poisoning caused by a toxin produced by the bacteria *Clostridium botulinum* and *C. parabotulinum*.

*Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE)*: also known as mad cow disease, BSE is a degenerative brain disorder that appears to be caused by *prions*, which are abnormal virus-like proteins.

*Built environment*: encompasses all of the buildings, spaces and products that are created or significantly modified by humans. It includes our homes, schools and workplaces, parks, business areas and roads.

*Campylobacter*: a type of toxic bacterium. *Campylobacter* may be found in untreated water and domestic animals.

*Carcinogen*: a substance or agent that causes cancer.

*CFCs*: [see Chlorofluorocarbons]

*Chlorinated dioxins and furans*: closely related families of aromatic **organic chemicals** that include more than 200 different compounds. Dioxins and furans break down slowly in the environment and tend to accumulate in living tissues.

*Chlorination by-product*: [see Disinfection by-product]

*Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs)*: a family of synthetic chemical compounds containing carbon, fluorine and chlorine. CFCs have been implicated in the destruction of the ozone layer.

*Chronic exposure*: long-term **exposure** to a substance over a period of months or years.

*Contaminant*: any foreign substance, whether chemical, radioactive or microbiological, that enters food, water, air or soil. Some contaminants are created through human activities, whereas others are the result of natural processes.

*Creosote*: a complex organic mixture that contains more than 300 compounds. **Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons** (PAHs) account for up to 90% of the total mixture.

*Cryptosporidium*: a pathogenic water-borne **protozoan** that causes cryptosporidiosis, a disease characterized by diarrhea, stomach cramps or a mild fever. Cryptosporidiosis can be fatal in people with weakened immune systems.

*Dental fluorosis*: a generally mild condition, caused by **exposure** to slightly elevated fluoride levels, that involves tooth mottling or discoloration [see also Skeletal fluorosis].

*Dermatitis*: an inflammation of the skin.

*Determinant of health*: one of the multiple factors that contribute to the health of populations.

*Disinfection by-product*: a chemical generated by chlorination or other water disinfection processes. The principal toxic by-products of chlorination are called **trihalomethanes (THMs)**. Other disinfectants, such as ozone, can generate bromate and formaldehyde.

*Distillation*: a process for removing dissolved impurities in liquids by boiling the liquids, collecting the vapours and then condensing (cooling) the vapours into liquids.

*DNA*: the genetic material found in many organisms.

*Dose-response assessment*: a study in which the subjects are given a range of doses of an agent, and the resulting health effects are monitored over time.

*Dose-response relationship*: a relationship in which increasing **exposure** to a **hazard** increases the effect being measured.

*Ecosystem*: a dynamic, self-regulating, natural community of plants, animals and micro-organisms that interact with one another and with their non-living environment.

*Electromagnetic field (EMF)*: a combination of electric and magnetic fields that emanates from electric cables, wires, fixtures and household appliances.

*Endocrine disruptor*: a naturally occurring chemical or synthetic pollutant capable of disrupting the endocrine (hormonal) system, which controls reproduction, growth, energy metabolism and other bodily functions. Some endocrine disruptors can mimic or interfere with such hormones as thyroid hormone, estrogen and testosterone.

*Environmental sensitivity*: a condition in which an individual is particularly sensitive to chemicals or other substances in the environment.

*Environmental tobacco smoke (ETS)*: also known as passive or second-hand smoke, ETS is a combination of exhaled smoke and the sidestream smoke from cigarettes, cigars or pipes.

*Epidemiology*: the study of the distribution and determinants of disease and deaths in human populations. Epidemiology is concerned with both the frequencies and types of illnesses and deaths in particular groups of people and the factors that influence their distribution.

*Ergonomics*: a science that studies the relationship between people and their working environment in order to maximize comfort, efficiency and productivity.

*Essential nutrient*: a protein, fat, carbohydrate, vitamin, mineral or other trace element found in food that is considered essential to good health.

*Exposure*: the contact between a substance and a person or group of people.

*Exposure assessment*: the process of assessing the amount of contact between a substance and the person, group or area being monitored in order to estimate the **risk** from that substance. Exposure assessment can be done by directly measuring the **exposure** as it occurs, predicting exposure using monitoring data and computer modelling and reconstructing historical exposure patterns.

*Exposure pathway*: the pathway a **contaminant** may take to reach humans or other living organisms, such as air, water, food and soil.

*Exposure route:* the means by which **contaminants** enter the body, such as eating, drinking, breathing and skin contact.

*Food additive:* a substance that is deliberately added to food during processing or storage to maintain product consistency, delay spoilage, enhance flavour, maintain nutritional quality, extend the shelf life, improve appearance or facilitate key stages in food processing.

*Food chain:* a series of organisms, each one eating the organism below it in the chain and being eaten by the next organism above it in the chain.

*Gastroenteritis:* an inflammation of the lining of the stomach or intestines.

*Genotoxic carcinogen:* an agent, such as **ionizing radiation** and certain types of chemicals, that causes cancer by damaging **DNA**.

*Giardia:* a pathogenic water-borne **protozoan** that causes giardiasis or “beaver fever,” a long-lasting gastrointestinal disease characterized by watery diarrhea, loss of appetite, dehydration, cramps and sometimes vomiting.

*Global warming:* a gradual increase in average global temperatures that appears to be caused by increasing concentrations of “**greenhouse gases**” in the **atmosphere**.

*Greenhouse gas:* an atmospheric gas, such as carbon dioxide and methane, that traps solar **radiation** in the form of heat [see also Global warming].

*Ground-level ozone:* a poisonous gas formed when **nitrogen oxides** and **volatile organic compounds (VOCs)** react in the presence of sunlight.

*Groundwater:* water found in soil or in pores or crevices in rock [see also Surface water].

*Guidelines:* for this report, a recommended limit for an agent, which is intended to protect human health or the environment. A guideline is not legally enforceable.

*Hazard:* an adverse impact on health that can result from **exposure** to a substance, process or product (i.e. an agent).

*Hazardous waste:* a solid, liquid or gas that is harmful to human health or the environment because of its toxic, radioactive, flammable or infectious properties.

*Health indicator:* a statistic or other measure that illustrates the existence, presence, nature or effects of one or more health determinants.

*Heavy metal:* a dense metal with a relatively high atomic mass, such as lead, nickel, mercury or cadmium.

*Hexachlorobenzene:* a synthetic chemical compound once registered for use in Canada as a fungicidal seed treatment.

*Hormone mimicker:* [see Endocrine disruptor]

*Incidence:* the number of new cases of disease or deaths in a population during a specified time.

*Indicator:* [see Health indicator]

*Infrastructure:* the basic services needed to keep a society running. Hard infrastructure includes services delivered physically, such as drinking water, roads, sewage systems and public utilities. Soft infrastructure includes services delivered by people, such as education and recreation.

*Inorganic chemical:* a chemical compound that does not contain carbon, such as lead, nitrate, ozone or fluoride.

*Ionizing radiation:* **radiation** that has sufficient energy to remove electrons from the atoms of the material through which it passes.

*Listeriosis:* a rare and potentially fatal disease caused by certain strains of *Listeria* bacteria. Listeriosis is associated with such effects as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fever and headache. In severe infections, victims develop blood poisoning and/or a brain infection, such as meningitis or encephalitis.

*Long-range atmospheric transport:* a phenomenon in which airborne **contaminants** may travel hundreds or thousands of kilometres before falling to Earth.

*Lowest-observed-adverse-effect level (LOAEL):* the lowest dose of a chemical that produces an observable adverse effect in an exposed group.

*Maximum residue limit (MRL):* the permissible level of a **pesticide** allowed in a commercial food item.

*Melanoma:* a type of skin cancer that can appear as a new mole or pigmented spot on the skin or as a change in a mole or previously stable pigmented spot.

*Methemoglobinemia:* a life-threatening condition in which body tissues are deprived of oxygen because of a reduction in the oxygen-carrying capacity of the blood.

*Methyl mercury:* an organic compound and the most toxic form of mercury.

*Micro-organisms:* also known as microbes, these include bacteria, viruses, fungi, **protozoa** and blue-green algae.

*Monitoring:* the repetitive and continued observation, measurement and evaluation of human health or the environment to detect changes over a period of time.

*Municipal plan:* a policy document that indicates the proposed locations of various land uses and major roads. The purpose of a municipal plan is to provide a long-term public policy framework for the ongoing decisions of governments and the private sector.

*Mycotoxin:* a **toxic substance** produced by a mould, such as an aflatoxin, ochratoxin or fusarium toxin.

*Natural environment:* our air, land, water, vegetation and wildlife.

*Natural pesticide:* a substance produced by a plant that defends it against insect and animal predators.

*Naturalization:* a way of designing and maintaining parks and open spaces through the use of plants and other species native to the region, thus enhancing ecological diversity.

*Nitrates/nitrites:* naturally occurring nitrogen salts used as antimicrobial preservatives in cured meats.

*Nitrogen oxides:* a principal ingredient of acid rain, nitrogen oxides (which include nitric oxide, nitrogen dioxide, nitrous oxide, as well as several other less common gases) are generated by lightning and nitrogen-fixing soil bacteria and as by-products of fossil fuel combustion.

*Nitrosamines:* chemical compounds that are created from **nitrates and nitrites** and have been shown to cause cancer in animals.

*No-observed-adverse-effect level (NOAEL):* the level of **exposure** to a substance at which no adverse effects were observed in an exposed group.

*Noise:* an undesirable sound that annoys people, interferes with communication, disturbs sleep or rest or causes loss of hearing.



*Non-carcinogen*: a substance that does not cause cancer.

*Non-genotoxic carcinogen*: a substance that causes cancer but does not damage **DNA**.

*Non-ionizing radiation*: a form of **radiation** with less energy than **ionizing radiation**, which includes **ultraviolet radiation** and **electromagnetic fields**.

*Non-threshold effect*: an effect that can occur at any level of **exposure**.

*Novel foods*: foods that have not been previously available, foods developed using processes that have not been previously used and foods that have been modified using genetic engineering or other **biotechnology** processes.

*Occupational exposure*: **exposure** to an agent, such as **radiation** or a chemical, in the workplace.

*Organic chemical*: a chemical that contains carbon usually combined with hydrogen and often other elements, such as oxygen or nitrogen.

*Organochlorine*: an **organic chemical** that contains chlorine, such as a **chlorinated dioxin or furan**.

*Ozonation*: a water purification method that involves the use of ozone to destroy microbial **pathogens**.

*Ozone*: [see Ground-level ozone]

*PAHs*: [see Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons]

*Particulates*: tiny airborne solids and liquids that vary in size and chemical composition.

*Pathogen*: a living organism that causes disease.

*PCBs*: [see Polychlorinated biphenyls]

*Persistent pollutant*: a pollutant that takes a long time to break down or be rendered harmless in the environment.

*Pesticide*: a natural or synthetic substance used to control such pests as insects, rodents, weeds, bacteria, viruses and fungi.

*Phytoplankton*: tiny aquatic plants.

*PM<sub>2.5</sub>*: airborne particles that have a diameter of less than 2.5 µm.

*PM<sub>10</sub>*: airborne particles that have a diameter of less than 10 µm.

*Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs)*: a group of 209 structurally similar chemical compounds composed of carbon, hydrogen and chlorine that were once widely used as insulators and flame retardants because of their stability and low flammability.

*Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs)*: a family of chemical compounds containing a number of fused benzene rings, which occur in fossil fuels, particularly coal tars.

*Population health*: an approach to health care that focusses on the health of the population as a whole, and of subgroups within the population, by addressing factors that contribute to health and their complex interactions.

*Prevalence*: the number of existing cases of an illness or injury in a given population at a specific point in time.

*Prion*: [see Bovine spongiform encephalopathy]

*Protozoa* (sing. *protozoan*): microscopic, single-celled animals, which usually live in water. Some species, such as **Giardia** and **Cryptosporidium**, are pathogenic. Protozoa are much larger than bacteria.

*Radiation*: energy in the form of electromagnetic waves or particles.

*Radioactive waste*: any waste material that contains or is contaminated with technologically enhanced natural or artificial **radionuclides** for which no use is foreseen.

*Radionuclide*: an unstable nuclide (nucleus of an atom) that undergoes spontaneous radioactive decay, emitting **ionizing radiation** in the process and changing from one element into another.

*Recreational waters*: waters used for recreational purposes, such as fishing, swimming, boating and windsurfing.

*Reference dose*: an acceptable level of exposure of humans to an agent.

*Relative risk*: a comparison of the **incidence** rate of disease or death in a group exposed to a specific agent with the corresponding rate in an unexposed group.

*Reverse osmosis*: a process for removing inorganic and organic **contaminants** from water.

*Risk*: a measure of both the **hazard** to human health resulting from **exposure** to a substance, process or product and the probability of the hazard occurring.

*Risk assessment*: the process of identifying a **risk** and estimating its potential effects.

*Risk communication*: any exchange of information between interested parties concerning the existence, nature, form, severity or acceptability of health or environmental **risks**.

*Risk estimation*: the process of determining the likelihood that a particular adverse health effect will occur following **exposure** to an agent.

*Risk factors*: determinants of health (e.g. behaviours such as smoking or low levels of physical activity), which can increase the likelihood that adverse health effects will occur.

*Risk management*: the selection and implementation of strategies to control a **risk**, followed by monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the strategies.

*Risk perception*: the way in which individuals intuitively see and judge **risks**. Risk perception is influenced by such factors as age, gender, level of education, region of residence, values and previous exposure to information about a particular **hazard**.

*Safety factor*: [see Uncertainty factor]

*Salmonella*: A family of bacteria that includes more than 2000 different strains, all of which can cause illness. Most species are associated with inducing **gastroenteritic** diseases that vary in severity.

*Seasonal affective disorder (SAD)*: a cyclical depression that normally begins in October or November when daylight hours decrease and ends in March or April when the days get longer.

*Sick building syndrome*: collective symptoms, including headaches, nausea, fatigue, drowsiness and eye, nose and throat irritation, that appear to arise from indoor air contamination.

*Sievert*: the unit of measure of **radiation** dose.

*Skeletal fluorosis*: a progressive disorder caused by **chronic exposure** to elevated fluoride levels in which the bones increase in density and become more brittle [see also Dental fluorosis].

*Smog*: a combination of smoke and fog in the **atmosphere**, often visible as a brownish yellow haze over urban areas. A product of motor vehicle exhaust and industrial pollution, smog tends to form under conditions of bright sunlight, high temperature and a stationary air mass.

*Standard*: a voluntary or legally enforceable limit for a substance or agent that is intended to protect human health or the environment. Exceeding the standard could result in unacceptable harm to whatever the standard is intended to protect.

*Sulphites*: a family of food preservatives that help prevent the deterioration of produce during shipping and storage and preserve the freshness of prepared foods.

*Surface water*: water found in lakes, rivers, streams and ponds [see also Groundwater].

*Sustainable development*: the combination of economic, social and environmental goals, taking into account their effects on human health. The concept reflects the fact that development is essential to satisfy human needs and to improve the quality of human life but must be based on the efficient and environmentally responsible use of all our scarce resources: natural, human and economic.

*THMs*: [see Trihalomethanes]

*Threshold effect*: an effect that occurs above a generally accepted minimum dose (or threshold).

*Tolerable daily intake*: [see Acceptable daily intake]

*Toxaphene*: a synthetic insecticide containing over 670 chemical compounds. The use of toxaphene on Canadian crops was discontinued in 1970.

*Toxic substance*: a substance capable of causing harm to humans, animals or other living things at some level of **exposure**.

*Toxicology*: the *science of poisons*; the study of the adverse effects of agents on living organisms, including humans.

*Toxoplasmosis*: a parasitic disease caused by the **protozoan** *Toxoplasma gondii*, which lives in domestic animals, such as cats, cattle, pigs and poultry.

*Transboundary air pollution*: air pollution that crosses international borders through atmospheric transport.

*Trihalomethanes (THMs)*: a family of chemical by-products generated by water chlorination.

*Turbidity*: a measurement of the number of particles (e.g. clay, silt, organic matter, micro-organisms) that are present in water.

*Ultraviolet (UV) radiation*: a form of **non-ionizing** or low-energy **radiation** that is invisible to the naked eye. Humans are exposed to UV radiation primarily from the sun.

*Uncertainty factor*: in **risk estimation**, the number by which a dose is divided in order to establish an acceptable level of **exposure** for humans.

*Volatile organic compounds (VOCs)*: organic liquids or gases that vaporize at low temperatures.

## ACRONYMS

ADI:	acceptable daily intake
AECB:	Atomic Energy Control Board
AIDS:	acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
ALARA:	as low as reasonably achievable
ALEP:	Active Living and the Environment Program
APHE:	Action Plan on Health and the Environment
AQI:	Air Quality Index
ARET:	Accelerated Reduction and Elimination of Toxics
ASP:	amnesic shellfish poisoning
BSE:	bovine spongiform encephalopathy
CCA:	copper–chromium–arsenate
CCME:	Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment
CEAA:	<i>Canadian Environmental Assessment Act</i>
CEPA:	<i>Canadian Environmental Protection Act</i>
CFCs:	chlorofluorocarbons
CHIRPP:	Canadian Hospitals Injury Reporting and Prevention Program
CJD:	Creutzfeld-Jacob Disease
CMHC:	Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
CWME:	Canadian Waste Materials Exchange
DDT:	dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane
DFO:	Department of Fisheries and Oceans
DNA:	deoxyribonucleic acid
DSP:	diarrhetic shellfish poisoning
EAGLE:	Effects on Aborigines from the Great Lakes Environment

EMF: electromagnetic fields  
ERL: extraneous maximum residue limit  
ETS: environmental tobacco smoke  
FCM: Federation of Canadian Municipalities  
HCB: hexachlorobenzene  
ICRP: International Commission on Radiological Protection  
IMAC: interim maximum acceptable concentration  
LCDC: Laboratory Centre for Disease Control  
LOAEL: lowest-observed-adverse-effect level  
MAC: maximum acceptable concentration  
MRL: maximum residue limit  
NAPS: National Air Pollution Surveillance  
NCSRP: National Contaminated Sites Remediation Program  
NGO: non-governmental organization  
NOAEL: no-observed-adverse-effect level  
NO<sub>x</sub>: nitrogen oxides  
NPRI: National Pollutant Release Inventory  
PAHs: polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons  
PCBs: polychlorinated biphenyls  
PCP: pentachlorophenol  
PDI: probable daily intake  
PFRA: Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration  
PHI: Public Health Intelligence  
PKU: phenylketonuria  
PMRA: Pest Management Regulatory Agency  
POPs: persistent organic pollutants  
PSP: paralytic shellfish poisoning  
PVC: polyvinyl chloride  
SAD: seasonal affective disorder  
SPF: sun protection factor  
TCDD: 2,3,7,8-tetrachlorodibenzodioxin  
TDI: tolerable daily intake  
THMs: trihalomethanes  
TSMP: Toxic Substances Management Policy  
UV: ultraviolet  
VOCs: volatile organic compounds



## UNITS AND SYMBOLS

L: litre, the basic unit of volume

dL: decilitre, one-tenth of a litre

mL: millilitre, one-thousandth of a litre

g: gram, the basic unit of weight or mass

mg: milligram, one-thousandth of a gram

µg: microgram, one-millionth of a gram

ng: nanogram, one-billionth of a gram

kg: kilogram, one thousand grams

t: tonne, equivalent to one thousand kilograms

kt: kilotonne, one thousand tonnes

ppm: parts per million

ppb: parts per billion

ppt: parts per trillion

mg/kg: milligrams per kilogram, equivalent to parts per million

µg/kg: micrograms per kilogram, equivalent to parts per billion

ng/kg: nanograms per kilogram, equivalent to parts per trillion

µg/L: microgram per litre, equivalent to parts per billion

µg/dL: micrograms per decilitre, equivalent to parts per hundred million

m: metre

m<sup>3</sup>: cubic metre

µm: micrometre (micron), one-millionth of a metre

km: kilometre, one thousand metres

km/L: kilometres per litre (used for measuring gas mileage)

dB: decibel, a unit for expressing the relative intensity of sound

Bq: becquerel, a measure of the strength or activity of a radioactive substance, representing one disintegration per second of that substance

Sv: sievert, a unit of radiation dose equal to one joule of energy per kilogram of absorbing tissue

mSv: millisievert, one-thousandth of a sievert

°C: degrees Celsius

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