



# Saanich Water Distribution System 2018 Annual Water Quality Report

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## 1.0 Introduction

This report is the 2018 annual overview of the results from water quality samples collected from the Saanich Drinking Water System (Map 1). The report summarizes data from District of Saanich owned and operated infrastructure with sample locations including reservoirs, pump stations, pressure regulating stations and locations from the distribution system. The parameters that are routinely monitored in distribution systems for determining the microbiological quality of the drinking water are *E. coli*, total coliforms, turbidity, and chlorine residual. The water samples are collected by District of Saanich and Capital Regional District (CRD) water quality staff and analytical testing is performed at the CRD Water Quality Lab. Monthly and weekly summary reports on water quality data are posted on CRD's website at: [www.crd.bc.ca/about/data/drinking-water-quality-reports/greater-victoria-water-quality-reports](http://www.crd.bc.ca/about/data/drinking-water-quality-reports/greater-victoria-water-quality-reports)

## 2.0 Water System Description

The District of Saanich purchases bulk water from the Capital Regional District (CRD) Integrated Water Services. The bulk water typically originates from the Sooke Lake Reservoir. Once a year, usually in December, the CRD supplies water from their Goldstream water source while performing maintenance on the Sooke Lake Reservoir. From Sooke Lake Reservoir the water travels to Saanich through several transmission mains. These mains are shown on the Saanich Water Pressure Zones & Water Mains 2016 map (Appendix A). Saanich is supplied by CRD Transmission Mains #1, #3, & #4.

There are 19 water connections from the CRD transmission system into the Saanich distribution system.

The Saanich Distribution system consists of 31 different pressure zones where source water comes directly from a Capital Regional District supply main or from another Saanich pressure zone.

The distribution system consists of 18 pumping stations, 49 pressure reducing stations, and 4 water reservoirs.

The Saanich Distribution System reservoirs are used to store and supply drinking water but also provide system balancing and fire and emergency storage. Listed from largest to smallest:

- Rithet Reservoir, 15,750 m<sup>3</sup> (3,464,516 imperial gallons)
- Mount Tolmie Reservoir, 4,063 m<sup>3</sup> (893,735 imperial gallons)
- Wesley Reservoir, 2,632 m<sup>3</sup> (578,959 imperial gallons)
- Hartland Reservoir, 118 m<sup>3</sup> (25,956 imperial gallons)

### 3.0 Water Quality Regulations

The District of Saanich Water Distribution System must comply with the British Columbia Drinking Water Protection Act (BCDWPA) and Drinking Water Protection Regulation (BCDWPR) as well as follow federal Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality (GCDWQ).

The water quality standards for potable water systems are shown in Schedule A of the British Columbia Drinking Water Protection Regulation and in the Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality Summary Table. These standards are provided in Table 1:

*Table 1 - Water Quality Standards for Potable Water – BCDWPR & GCDWQ*

Parameter:	Standard:
<i>Escherichia coli</i>	No detectable <i>Escherichia coli</i> per 100 ml
Total coliform bacteria	
(a) 1 sample in 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
	No detectable total coliform from consecutive samples from the same site

Schedule B of the BCDWPR requires the number of water samples collected to correspond with population size as shown in Table 2:

*Table 2 - Frequency of Monitoring Samples for Prescribed Water Supply Systems - BCDWPR*

Population Served by the Prescribed Water Supply System:	Number of Samples Per Month:
Less than 5,000	4
5,000 to 90,000	1 per 1,000 population
More than 90,000	90 plus 1 per 10,000 population in excess of 90,000

## 4.0 Water Quality Monitoring

The population of Saanich is approximately 114,148 (based on 2016 Census data). Based on Schedule B of the BCDWPR Saanich is required to collect 93 compliance samples per month. In 2018, a total of 1,220 samples were collected from 65 dedicated sampling stations within Saanich. The requirements from Schedule B of the BCDWPR and the actual samples taken from the Saanich Distribution System are summarized in Table 3.

*Table 3 - District of Saanich Frequency of Sampling as per Schedule B of BCDWPR*

Year	Population	Number of Sample sites	Required Number of Samples per Month <sup>1</sup>	Actual	
				Average Number of Samples Per Month Collected	Number of Samples Per Year Collected
2018	114,148	64	93	101.7	1,220

<sup>1</sup> Minimum number of samples per month required by Schedule B of BCDWPR and Island Health Drinking Water Officer

In 2018, the water quality samples were jointly collected by District of Saanich and Capital Regional District staff with Saanich staff collecting between 33 to 42 of the required 93 samples per month. Although the average monthly number of samples taken exceeds requirements, during February and March 2018 we weren't able to achieve the required samples due to operational challenges.

## 5.0 Bacteriological and Physical Water Quality Results

The Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment state that microbiological pathogens are considered to be the most significant threat to public drinking water affecting the public's health. The effects of microbiological pathogens are acute. If they are ingested, pathogens can give people gastro-intestinal illness within a matter of hours or days. In some cases, ingesting microbiological pathogens can result in permanent damage to internal organs or lead to chronic health issues. In the most severe instances, ingesting pathogens can be fatal.

### 5.1 Escherichia coli (*E. coli*)

In 2018, all 1,220 water quality compliance samples passed the bacterial standard for *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) as prescribed in the water quality standards within the BCDWPR with no *E. coli* detected.

*E. coli* is used as an indicator of the microbiological safety of drinking water. *E. coli* is a member of the coliform group of bacteria that is naturally found in the intestines of humans and warm blooded animals with a maximum acceptable concentration of none detectable in 100 ml of water. Monitoring for *E. coli* provides information on the microbial condition of the distribution system. The presence of *E. coli* indicates recent fecal contamination and the potential presence of microorganisms capable of gastrointestinal illnesses. The absence of *E. coli* in drinking water generally indicates that the water system is free of gastrointestinal illness causing bacteria.

If *E. coli* is detected in a water sample, the BCDWPA stipulates that the lab conducting the analysis (CRD) must notify the water supplier (Saanich), the Drinking Water Officer, and the Medical Health Officer. In turn Saanich must also immediately notify the Drinking Water Officer and the Medical Health Officer. Together, an assessment will be made of the possible health risk to the public and the most effective means to protecting the public. The assessment will take into account past water samples, the temperature, turbidity, chlorine residual of the water sample as well as operational changes or disturbances creating low pressures and other relevant information. The water will be resampled immediately. If the risk assessment deems the water system is operating as expected, a decision may be made to wait for results from the second water sample to determine if further action is required.

## 5.2 Total Coliforms

In 2018, there were 1,220 water samples taken with 11 testing positive for total coliforms. Seven of the positive samples were within the standards while four exceeded the 10 CFU/100 ml total coliform concentration. The sampling stations that tested positive were immediately retested and subsequent results showed no total coliforms present. Therefore, there were no consecutive samples from the same sample site showing total coliforms. The remaining 1,209 water samples tested all passed the BCDWPR standard and Canadian Drinking Water Quality Guidelines.

Saanich Water Distribution system complied with the no greater than 10% total coliform standard for all months. The annual total coliform percentage positive was below the 10% limit at 0.6% (Table 4).

Coliform bacteria are used as operational indicators in water distribution systems. Their presence indicates water quality has degraded, possibly by bacterial regrowth or system contamination. Alternatively, coliform bacteria positive samples can also indicate contamination during sample collection.

Monitoring for total coliforms allows for the detection of changing conditions, intrusion of contaminants, or areas of reduced water quality, which can then be investigated and corrective actions determined.

Table 4 - Saanich Distribution System Bacteriological Water Quality 2018

Month	Bacterial Water Samples Collected	Total Coliforms				E.coli Samples > 0 CFU/100ml
		Samples TC > 0 CFU/100ml	TC > 0 Percent	Resamples TC > 0 CFU/100ml	Samples TC > 10 CFU/100ml	
January	94	2	2.1	0	1	0
February	77 <sup>1</sup>	0	0.0	0	0	0
March	91 <sup>1</sup>	1	1.1	0	0	0
April	124	0	0.0	0	0	0
May	109	0	0.0	0	0	0
June	100	3	3.0	0	2	0
July	110	1	0.9	0	1	0
August	112	0	0.0	0	0	0
September	97	0	0.0	0	0	0
October	111	0	0.0	0	0	0
November	100	0	0.0	0	0	0
December	95	0	0.0	0	0	0
Total	1220	7	0.6	0	4 <sup>2</sup>	0

<sup>1</sup> Monthly number of samples taken not compliant due to operational challenges.

<sup>2</sup> Sample locations immediately retested and came back no total coliforms present.

### 5.3 Chlorine Residual

The annual median chlorine residual in the Saanich Water Distribution System was 1.26 mg/L (Table 5). The lowest monthly median was in October (0.92 mg/L) and the maximum monthly median was in June (1.53 mg/L) (Figure 1). The recommended acceptable range concentration for chlorine in drinking water is 0.5 mg/L - 3.0 mg/L.

Chlorine is used to treat the raw water from Sooke Lake to produce potable, disinfected water. The Chlorine residual in the drinking water post treatment is there to safeguard against microbial regrowth or contamination in the drinking water system. Monitoring the chlorine residual in the drinking water system gives valuable information on the condition of the water currently in the system. A stable chlorine residual indicates that there is no microbial regrowth in the system. Alternately, if the chlorine residual were to suddenly decrease or disappear altogether would indicate that something has changed in the system and further investigation is needed to determine the cause to ensure that there has not been a contamination event in the water system.

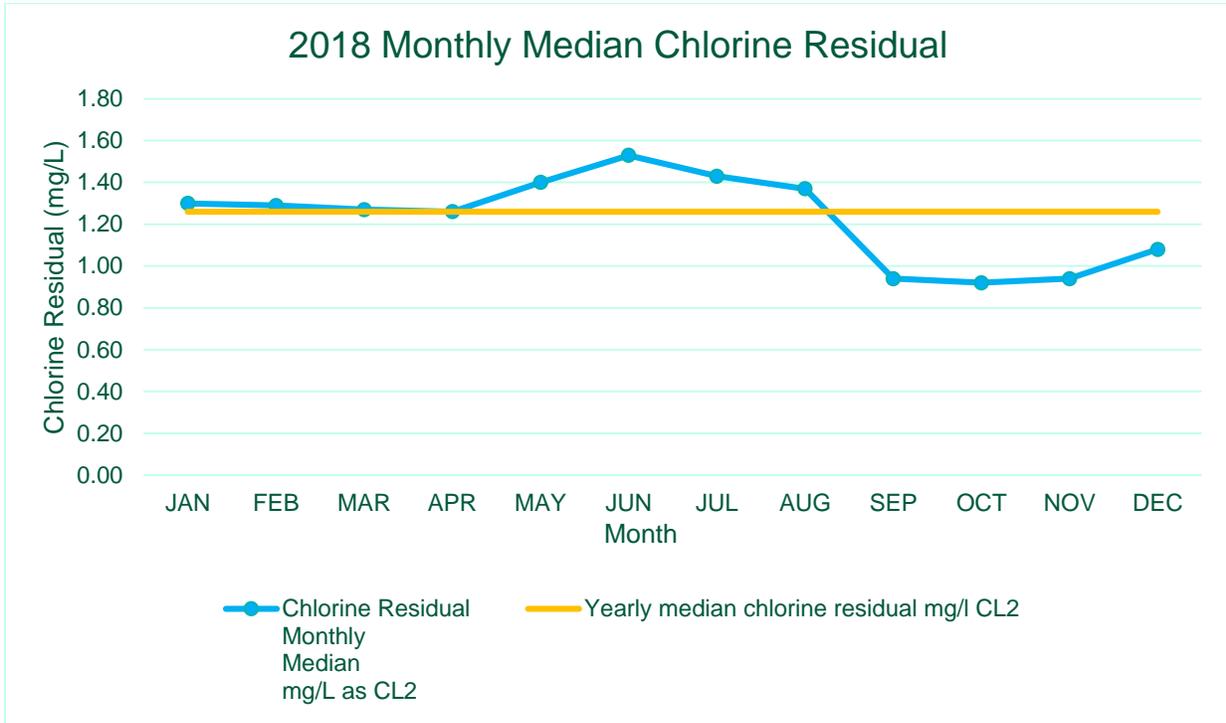


Figure 1 - 2018 Monthly Median Chlorine Residual (mg/L)

#### 5.4 Water Temperature

The CRD’s Sooke Lake Reservoir is a surface raw water source subject to a wide seasonal variation in temperatures which affects the water temperature within the Saanich Distribution System. Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality give temperature as an aesthetic objective of  $\leq 15^{\circ}\text{C}$ . Aesthetic objective limits apply to certain characteristics of the drinking water that can lower user acceptance due to the perceived palatability of the water. Temperatures above  $15^{\circ}\text{C}$  in the water system can lead to unpleasant tastes and odours. From a consumer perspective, cool water tastes better than warm water

The annual median water temperature in the Saanich Water Distribution System was  $12.3^{\circ}\text{C}$ . Monthly medians ranged from  $7.4^{\circ}\text{C}$  in January to  $18.1^{\circ}\text{C}$  in August (Figure 2). Temperatures in the Saanich Distribution System stayed below the Aesthetic Objective limit for most of the year except the summer months.

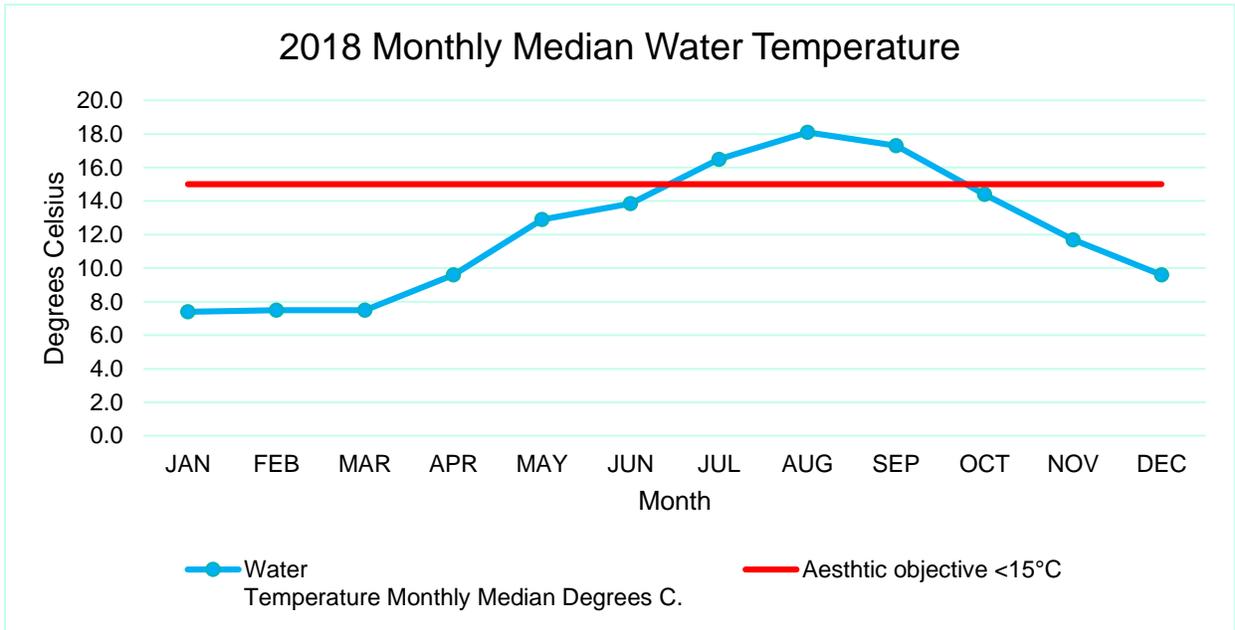


Figure 2 - 2018 monthly Median Water Temperature (degrees Celsius)

## 5.5 Turbidity

Turbidity refers to the suspension of small particles of sediment or organic matter within water that causes a cloudy appearance. Turbidity is measured by the amount of light scattered by the particles within the water sample. Turbidity is measured in nephelometric turbidity units (NTU). Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality recommends that water entering a water distribution system have turbidity of 1.0 NTU or less.

In 2018, there were 473 turbidity samples taken with seven exceeding the guidelines. Localized turbidity events were likely caused by water main flushing activities, fire hydrant use, and/or velocity/flow changes due to construction. The resulting dis-colouration or cloudiness can be an aesthetic concern to customers. Turbidity is generally temporary and flushing of cold water taps can clear up the water.

*Table 5 - Saanich Distribution System Turbidity, Chlorine Residual, and Water Temperature 2018*

Month	Turbidity		Chlorine Residual Monthly Median mg/l as CL2	Water Temperature Monthly Median Degrees C
	Samples Collected	Adverse > 1 NTU		
January	46	0	1.30	7.4
February	36	1	1.29	7.5
March	31	3	1.27	7.5
April	32	0	1.26	9.6
May	47	1	1.40	12.9
June	38	0	1.53	13.9
July	47	0	1.43	16.5 <sup>1</sup>
August	39	0	1.37	18.1 <sup>1</sup>
September	38	0	0.94	17.3 <sup>1</sup>
October	46	1	0.92	14.4
November	37	1	0.94	11.7
December	36	0	1.08	9.6
Total or Median	473	7	1.26	12.3

<sup>1</sup>Exceeded Canadian Drinking Water Quality guidelines of  $\leq 15^{\circ}\text{C}$

## 6.0 System Maintenance

Saanich undertakes daily, monthly, and annual maintenance functions to ensure that the drinking water system and its components are in good working order for reliability purposes in the event of emergency shut downs or repairs. These ongoing maintenance functions help to ensure that the system components have the longest service life possible and keep service disruptions to customers to a minimum.

### 6.1 Unidirectional Flushing Program

Saanich operates an annual Unidirectional Flushing Program to remove sediment and biofilm from the water mains in order to maintain good water quality. Unidirectional flushing involves isolating segments of the water system by closing valves in order to flush sequentially from source to periphery of system.

Removing sediment and biofilm is important as sediment in water mains gives bacteria a place to live and hide from the chlorine residual in the water. Sediment reduces the flow capacity of the pipe network and sediment and biofilm may get disturbed if normal flow patterns change during fire hydrant use or construction work. Flushing out the sediment on an annual basis helps maintain proper flow and reduce dirty water complaints.

The Saanich water distribution system consists of over 540 km of pipe. In 2018, 244.2 km of water main was flushed due to the annual unidirectional flushing program. Due to the size of the distribution system, it typically takes two years to complete the whole program. The two largest water pressure zones in the system are flushed every other year with the remaining 29 pressure zones typically flushed yearly.

*Table 6 - Kilometers of Water Main Flushed by Year*

Year	Total Kilometers Flushed
2018	244.2
2017	295.0
2016	319.2

## 6.2 Monthly Flush Program

Saanich operates an ongoing Monthly Flush Program to flush out water from dead end sections of water main to maintain water quality and reduce customer complaints caused by taste and odours. Dead end sections of water main tend to have higher water age (length of time from treatment to consumption) than other parts of the system. Typically the higher water age on these dead end water mains are because the localized customer demand is not enough to effectively exchange the water in the pipe adequately. These dead end sections are also more prone to sedimentation where particles that enter the water system from Sooke Lake Reservoir can settle out due to the low flow.

The locations that are currently part of the Monthly Flush Program have been determined by customer complaints, field data and observations from Saanich staff throughout the years. The Monthly Flush Program is used to pro-actively maintain water quality in the dead end water mains within the Saanich Distribution System by removing sediment and bringing in fresh water with a higher chlorine residual to help prevent microbial growth in these areas.

## 6.3 Valve Maintenance

Water distribution valves are installed in the system to isolate small areas for emergency maintenance or repairs. Saanich undertakes an extensive program of inspection, exercising (opening and closing), and maintenance of valves annually to ensure that valves operate when needed.

There are over 9,500 valves in the Saanich Water Distribution System. Due to the number of valves in the system it takes four or five years to complete the valve program. In 2018, staff exercised 2,421 valves which equates to 25% of all valves.

*Table 7 - Water Valves Maintained by Year*

Year	Total Valves Maintained
2018	2,538
2017	2,573
2016	2,500

## 6.4 Hydrant Maintenance

The Saanich Water Distribution System has 2,356 fire hydrants. As part of the hydrant maintenance program 996 hydrants were inspected and serviced in 2018 to ensure proper operation. All hydrants are inspected and serviced on a 2 – 3 year cycle depending on operational efficiencies.

*Table 8 - Hydrants Maintained by Year*

Year	Total Hydrants Maintained
2018	996
2017	891
2016	972

## 7.0 Summary

1. The water quality data collected in 2018 indicates that the drinking water in the Saanich Distribution System is of good quality and safe to drink. Temperatures in the Saanich Distribution System stayed below the Aesthetic Objective of 15°C for most of the year except during the summer months.
2. Although the 2018 average monthly number of samples taken (101) exceeds the British Columbia Drinking Water Protection Act and Regulation (93), the Saanich Distribution System did not meet the monthly sampling requirements in the months of February and March. This was due to operational staffing challenges and weather related issues.
3. The Saanich Distribution System had no *E. coli* positive samples in all 1,220 water samples throughout the year.
4. The Saanich Distribution System had less than the 10% Total Coliform standard for all months with a monthly average at 0.6%. However, the system was not in full compliance due to four samples exceeding the 10 CFU/ 100 ml limit. The four sample sites were immediately retested and found no consecutive Total Coliform positive samples from the same sample sites. This likely is an indication that the positive samples were contaminated during original collection.



*Appendix B - References*

Canadian Drinking Water Guidelines:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/environmental-workplace-health/water-quality/drinking-water/canadian-drinking-water-guidelines.html>

Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality Summary Table 2017:

[https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/hc-sc/migration/hc-sc/ewh-semt/alt\\_formats/pdf/pubs/water-eau/sum\\_guide-res\\_recom/sum\\_guide-res\\_recom-eng.pdf](https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/hc-sc/migration/hc-sc/ewh-semt/alt_formats/pdf/pubs/water-eau/sum_guide-res_recom/sum_guide-res_recom-eng.pdf)

From Source to Tap: Guidance on the multi-barrier approach to Safe drinking Water:

[https://www.ccme.ca/files/Resources/water/source\\_tap/mba\\_guidance\\_doc\\_e.pdf](https://www.ccme.ca/files/Resources/water/source_tap/mba_guidance_doc_e.pdf)

British Columbia Drinking Water Protection Act:

[http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/01009\\_01](http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/01009_01)

British Columbia Drinking Water Protection Regulation:

[http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/200\\_2003](http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/200_2003)