



Sewage Aeration Lagoon / Wastewater Facility

Ministry Compliance Inspection Warning Letter (Feb 9, 2026)

The City received a warning letter from the BC Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy following its 2025 annual inspection.

No fines were issued, but several issues were noted in the review. Most of these items were administrative matters, like monitoring/reporting schedules, and recordkeeping.

Some “effluent exceedances” were reported in late summer/early fall 2025. This is when the concentration of pollutants in wastewater exceeds the legally set limits. The issue was promptly investigated.

Additional comparative testing was done on wastewater samples using two other labs. The results of this new test raised concerns about the reliability of the original lab results. The City changed lab providers, and results show that the facility is operating within certificate limits. To correct the administrative issues, the City is implementing stronger scheduling/controls and adding capacity (including project manager support).

The City submitted a written action plan response to the Ministry on March 11, 2026, and is strengthening controls to restore full compliance.

Key facts

- Aug 20, 2024: First Ministry inspection/audit resulted in a warning letter dated Dec 3, 2024 (no fines).
- Sept 24, 2025: Second annual inspection resulted in a warning letter dated Feb 9, 2026 (no fines).
- Repeat items were largely administrative, linked to capacity constraints affecting follow-through.
- The City has been transparent with the Ministry, including on lab result discrepancies.
- The City is diligently working towards operational compliance.

Q&A

Q: Are we being fined?

A: No. This is a warning letter, and no fines have been issued.

Q: Is this a public health emergency? Are we discharging untreated sewage?

A: The warning letter primarily identifies monitoring/reporting/administrative non-compliances. Where test results raised concerns, they were reported and investigated with enhanced Quality Assurance [QA] and Quality Control [QC]. The City is working proactively with the regulator.

Q: Did we exceed effluent limits?

A: Results from the previous lab indicated exceedances in late summer/early fall 2025 and were reported as required. Follow-up comparative testing with two additional labs produced results well below limits, while the original lab continued to report higher values—raising reliability concerns. Because the operating certificate requires reporting on schedule, those initial results had to be recorded as contraventions.

Q: What did we do about the lab issue?

A: The City undertook confirmatory testing, strengthened QA/QC, and changed laboratory providers. Recent results are within limits.

Q: Why are some administrative items repeat issues?

A: Some items repeated because staff capacity limited timely completion. The City is implementing stronger scheduling/controls and adding capacity (including project manager support) to complete corrective actions.

Q: Could enforcement escalate?

A: The Ministry noted escalation is possible if compliance is not restored. The City is responding within timelines and is confident it can restore compliance.