



News Release

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CLEAN WATER AGENCY DOING ADEQUATE JOB: AUDITOR GENERAL

(TORONTO) The provincial agency that provides drinking-water and wastewater services to many Ontario municipalities “generally had adequate procedures in place” for doing its job, but there is still room for improvement, Auditor General Jim McCarter says in his *2008 Annual Report*, released today.

“We found the Ontario Clean Water Agency (OCWA) has good processes in place for ensuring that the drinking water it supplies to its clients is safe and for treating water leaving a sewage plant,” McCarter said. “But there are some areas where OCWA needs to do better.”

The findings are contained in a value-for-money audit of OCWA, an agency of the Ministry of the Environment that operates 24% of the province’s municipal drinking-water systems and 36% of its municipal wastewater systems. The Agency employs 700 people and had profits of \$6.6 million on revenues of \$120 million in 2007.

The audit found that OCWA properly performed tests on drinking-water samples in a timely fashion, as required by the province, and that 99.6% of samples met legislated quality standards. OCWA also had fewer incidents than other facilities where sewage-plant wastewater discharged into the environment had contaminants exceeding the approved limits.

However, the Report also observed that:

- OCWA needs to improve its internal reporting process to ensure senior management and the Board of Directors receive useful, objective data on incidents, especially those of a potentially systemic nature.
- Although OCWA accounted for only one-quarter of ministry inspections of drinking-water and wastewater plants, its facilities accounted for more than half the provincial officer’s orders issued for significant non-compliance with regulations. The agency needed to take more timely action to address the identified issues.
- The majority of OCWA’s contracts to provide services for municipal water treatment facilities are for a fixed price over several years, adjusted for inflation, which means that OCWA bears the risk of any price increases above inflation.

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