

Soil and water protection

Bell's network infrastructure spans across Canada and requires various indoor and outdoor equipment to support communication and telecommunication services. If not properly managed, equipment operations and network infrastructure maintenance activities may impact the surrounding area by unintentionally introducing contaminants into the environment.

Moreover, Bell owns or leases many buildings to facilitate administrative activities, support network infrastructure and maintain service delivery. Related human activities and equipment installed in buildings contribute to the consumption of resources, including water.

To minimize and avoid the release of any contaminants to land or water and to efficiently manage the resource consumption generated by our activities, we have developed programs and sub-programs that seek to responsibly manage our petroleum equipment, contaminated properties, waste water from manholes and treated wood poles.

Petroleum products equipment management

Bell's petroleum storage tanks are essential to ensure back-up power for our networks and to meet our daily operational needs. They are critical assets in emergencies, as in the Great Ice Storm of 1998 where Bell's central offices played a key role in providing warm shelter for their communities during wide-scale and prolonged power outages across Québec.

Our storage tanks may be above ground or underground. Above ground tanks are easier to secure and inspect and are therefore preferred for tank installation and replacement projects. We understand the environmental risks associated with every aspect of petroleum product storage and management. Accordingly, our standard of care for these tanks generally surpasses the regulatory requirements of federal, provincial and U.S. state regulations (in the 6 states where Bell operates) that govern the installation, operation and removal of petroleum product tanks.

Of Bell's approximately 3600 petroleum storage tanks, 93% are above ground. We manage and monitor our petroleum storage tanks and equipment to maintain their integrity and prevent accidental spills. We perform annual inspections on every tank and conduct compliance audits as required by regulations. Our plan for managing our equipment also includes:

- Reducing (or optimizing) the number of tanks and minimizing the installation of underground tanks
- Replacing single-walled above ground tanks (with a capacity above 4,000 litres and located outside of buildings) with double-walled tanks
- Rigorously following our equipment inspection program
- Executing a multi-year replacement upgrade plan to replace or upgrade tanks by priority, based on a risk analysis



We have also installed leak alarms on petroleum equipment at key and critical sites and connected them to a centralized control center for 24-hour monitoring.

Environmental site assessments SDG 15



To serve Canadians across the country, Bell owns and leases numerous properties including administrative offices, central offices, work centres, switching centres, transmission towers and warehouses. These properties may have historical contamination (by Bell or by other entities), or may become contaminated by Bell's operations or by contaminants migrating from surrounding properties. Bell's operations may cause contamination from accidental spills or releases of petroleum hydrocarbons and by the leaching of treated wood utility poles.

Bell conducts environmental site assessments to minimize the environmental impact on soil and groundwater. Bell performs site assessments for cases that include terminating an operational activity that has a potential to cause contamination, the discovery of historical contamination, the discovery of a large spill or release of contaminants and for any real estate transaction (purchase, sale, lease or lease termination).

When required by regulations and when appropriate, remediation of soil and/or groundwater is conducted. The criteria for remediation are based on territorial, provincial and federal regulations.

Our property assessment program is driven by clear and measurable objectives:

1. Take the necessary measures to minimize the impacts to the natural environment in the event of a spill/release or discovered contamination.
2. Establish and maintain an efficient due diligence process to minimize Bell's environmental and financial liabilities associated with soil and groundwater contamination caused by previous land users.
3. Seek to prevent any future legal action associated with known contamination when leasing or selling a property.

Waste water from manholes GRI 306-2

A considerable portion of Bell's network is located in underground conduit structures that are accessible by manholes.

Underground and above-ground manhole entry points allow for effluent to migrate into them, and also allow for the possibility of contaminant migration. When Bell's underground network needs to be accessed for installation, maintenance, repair or decommissioning, the effluent that has accumulated in manholes must be pumped out in order for technicians to safely conduct their work. To ensure that contaminated effluent is not pumped outside of a Bell manhole, technicians follow the company's environmental pumping procedure.



Adherence to this procedure seeks to ensure that contaminated effluent is identified before the manhole is pumped, thereby protecting surrounding land and water bodies from these contaminants.

When water in a manhole is identified as being contaminated, a specialized company is engaged to safely pump and dispose of the contaminated effluent in a way that safeguards the environment. In the event contaminated water is inadvertently pumped into the environment, Bell seeks to promptly intervene and complete remediation.

Treated wood poles

A considerable portion of Bell's network is aerial, supported by approximately 1.5 million wood poles.

The majority of Bell's poles are treated with preservatives to extend their useful life and to help them withstand the natural elements. These preservatives can be toxic to lifeforms if conditions permit the preservatives to leach or otherwise be released into the environment.

Seeking to ensure that soil and water are not impacted by these preservatives, Bell adheres to pole installation criteria that take land slope, soil type, proximity to water bodies and other sensitive areas into consideration. We opt for untreated cedar poles when the environmental risks of using treated wood poles are elevated.



In addition to managing poles in the network, Bell stores new and used poles in storage yards. This facilitates aerial network installation, maintenance, repair and decommissioning activities. It is important that these poles are stored in a way that safeguards surrounding soil and water.

Bell poles that are not in use are stored in company-approved yards, built and maintained in accordance with industry best practices and the company's internal environmental procedure. This procedure ensures that all treated wood poles under Bell's administration are carefully controlled in accordance with industry standards and are managed in a way that protects the environment. For example, poles are never stored directly on the ground. Instead, they are always kept on pole bunks, below which impermeable membranes are installed.



Water consumption GRI 303-1, 303-5; SDG 6



In our industry, the majority of water usage relates to the manufacturing of electronic components by suppliers, rather than the day-to-day operational delivery of telecommunication services. Bell acknowledges that the availability of water is a growing concern in many communities around the world and that many of our suppliers face water stress, which can affect the availability of electronic components.

Bell's direct activities only have a minor impact on water resources, as we mainly use water for drinking and sanitary purposes, vehicle cleaning and cooling buildings and server rooms. This does not deter us from implementing programs and practices to control our water consumption.

Our water consumption reporting is based on a methodology that includes three sources of data: i) water meters, ii) estimation based on water-use intensity ratios and iii) utility bills; along with six site categorizations by primary water consumption type and intensity (e.g., equipment cooling, kitchen and domestic use). Together, these three data sources and site characterizations permit us to calculate the volume of water that our operations use every year.

In 2022, we continued to replace or upgrade cooling towers at seven of our buildings in order to contribute to more efficient water use at those sites. Despite these types of projects, the water consumed by our operations in 2022 increased, which is likely attributable to the greater demand for equipment room cooling due to higher average and peak air temperatures in our major operating areas.

GRI 303-5 WATER CONSUMPTION BY TYPE (in m³)

	Trend	2022	2021	2020
Office	Decrease	360,540	378,417	383,247
Operations	Increase	920,531	805,883	935,170
TOTAL	Increase	1,281,071	1,184,300	1,318,417

Future outlook

Bell seeks to maintain a rigorous plan to protect soil and water. Two of our major projects aim to install leak alarms on petroleum equipment at non-key and non-critical sites and at remote sites. These are targeted for completion by 2025.

Additionally, Bell plans to conclude its 5-year pole yard upgrade program by the end of 2023. This program improves multiple Bell pole yards in Ontario so that they meet higher protection standards. With regard to poles, we are also exploring different pole material options that help to limit the environmental risks and environmental exposure to treated wood preservatives.

Bell aims to continue maintaining a rigorous manhole effluents sub-program in order to protect soil and water from exposure to migrated contamination.

To the extent this information sheet contains forward-looking statements including, without limitation, outlooks, plans, objectives, goals, targets, strategic priorities, commitments, undertakings and other statements that do not refer to historical facts, these statements are not guarantees of future

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