



# NEWS RELEASE

## For Immediate Release

October 18, 2016

### **Mobile devices challenging for government to secure**

VICTORIA – The Office of the Auditor General of B.C. has released its latest report: *Management of Mobile Devices: Assessing the moving target in B.C.*

The report looks at how government manages mobile devices, such as smartphones and tablets, to maintain security of sensitive government information.

Mobile device technology is advanced enough that most of government's business could be done on mobile devices. "But the benefits of mobility come with risk," says Auditor General Carol Bellringer. "Any loss, theft or exposure of sensitive government information could negatively impact government and the people of British Columbia."

Mobile devices provide ready access to information but often, people sacrifice security for convenience. For example, they use a simple password and leave their devices unlocked for too long. These devices are typically connected 24-hours a day, which also allows more opportunity for unauthorized access. Finally, the small size of these devices means they're easily lost or stolen.

Bellringer credits government for being proactive in several areas and makes seven recommendations to further improve security. One of the most critical is to create an inventory of all devices that can access sensitive government information. "Government doesn't have a central record of smartphones and tablets with access to its information, which is concerning," says Bellringer. "You can't protect what you don't know about."

The report further recommends that government apply some key initial security settings when it first issues devices. Even though government provides security guidance to employees when they receive a device, the application of some of the key security settings is left to employees. As a result, appropriate security settings may not always be in place.

The Office of the Auditor General and the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner have each issued a report on mobile device management today. The two offices conducted concurrent examinations and worked together to develop 15 security and privacy tips to help everyone in British Columbia with their smartphones and tablets.

At a minimum, everyone should set a strong password, set a short inactivity-until-locked time and turn on the device's encryption.

The tip sheet and full report are available on the Office of the Auditor General website: [www.bcauditor.com/pubs](http://www.bcauditor.com/pubs)



OFFICE OF THE  
**Auditor General**  
of British Columbia

Bellringer and Acting Information and Privacy Commissioner Drew McArthur will answer questions pertaining to their respective reports and the tip sheet via a joint news conference.

News Conference Date: Tuesday, Oct. 18, 2016

Time: 11 a.m. (Pacific)

Dial-in Information:

From Vancouver: 604 681-0260

From elsewhere in Canada and the USA: 1 877 353-9184

Participant Pass Code: 44848#

During question and answer period, to ask a question: Press 01

During question and answer period, to exit the question queue: Press #

**About the Office of the Auditor General of B.C.**

The Auditor General is a non-partisan, independent Officer of the Legislature who reports directly to the Legislative Assembly. The *Auditor General Act* empowers the Auditor General and staff to conduct audits, report findings and make recommendations.

Contact us:

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