

Geocoding Self-Service (GCS) User Guide

Prepared by BC Stats

March 2020



CONTENTS

Service Overview.....	3
Fields Available.....	4
Census Geographies	4
Sub-Provincial Geographies.....	4
Location Fields.....	5
Date Fields	5
Other Fields	5
Using the GCS	7
Log-in.....	7
Application	7
Data Dictionary	11

SERVICE OVERVIEW

The GeoCoding Self-Service is an online tool designed to help users identify relationships between a postal code, administered by the Canada Post Corporation, and other geographic areas within British Columbia. Users will require a username and password to access the tool. Once logged in, users are required to supply a listing of postal codes in the form of an excel table and select desirable fields for geocoding. The tool draws from a database to assign geocodes for the selected geographic areas and returns the original file with the desired fields added after the last populated field. The database used for geocoding is based on a precision-based point file created by DMTI Spatial using the most accurate sources available to locate the postal codes. Because there are often multiple locations for a postal code, the geocoding is based on the best representative point for any postal code.

The primary use of such a tool allows the aggregation of records from postal coded administrative files to user defined areas such as municipalities, school districts, local health areas, etc., in a timely and cost-effective manner. Postal codes are constantly being added and retired. Using a base file closest to the date of the data collected will provide the best results as the tool will geocodes those postal codes that are active at that time as well as retired. Determining if a postal code is active or retired can be done by using the BIRTH_DATE and RET_DATE fields. Any record with a RET_DATE of 19000001 is active. Alternatively, output files also contain the ISRETIRED column by default which identifies each postal code as being retired (TRUE) or active (blank or FALSE). Invalid postal codes will be returned with "XX" in the field. Note that retired postal codes sometimes have inaccurate location and should generally be excluded.

FIELDS AVAILABLE

CENSUS GEOGRAPHIES

Below are the fields containing information relating to the Census geographic areas for the 2011 and 2016 Census:

Census Division (**CD_2011, CD_2016**)
Census Subdivision (**CSD_2011, CSD_2016**)
Full Census Subdivision (**CDCSD_2011, CDCSD_2016**)¹
Census Subdivision Name (**MUN_NAME_2011, MUN_NAME_2016**)
Census Metropolitan Area or Census Agglomeration Area (**CMACA_2011, CMACA_2016**)
Dissemination Area (**DA_2011, DA_2016**)
Census Tract (**CT_2011, CT_2016**)
Dissemination Block (**DB_2016**)²
Designated Place Name Listing (**DPL_2011, DPL_2016**)
Population Centre (**POPCTR_2016**)³

SUB-PROVINCIAL GEOGRAPHIES

Below are the fields containing boundaries for sub-provincial geographies within British Columbia:

Development Region (**DR_2011, DR_2016**)⁴
Health Authority (**HA**)
Health Service Delivery Area (**HSDA**)
Local Health Area (**LHA**)
Community Health Service Area (**CHSA**)
Pre-2018 Local Health Area (**LHA_PRE_2018**)⁵
Micro Health Area (**MHA**)⁶
Ministry of Children & Families Region (**MCFD**)
Ministry of Children & Families Service Delivery Area (**MCFD_SDA**)

¹ The CD is required to identify unique CSD's

² For limited use only. A postal code can contain more than one DB, but only the DB nearest the postal code centroid will be returned by GCS

³ GCS will return a blank value for postal codes outside of a population centre (identifying them as rural)

⁴ Development regions (or Economic Regions) are based on CD boundaries for each census

⁵ Deprecated after the introduction of CHSA and revision of Local Health Areas numbering in 2018

⁶ Deprecated after the introduction of CHSA in 2018

Ministry of Children & Families Local Service Area (**MCFD_LSA**)
College Region (**CR**)
School District (**SD**)
School District Trustee Electoral Area (**TEA**)⁷
Provincial Electoral District (**PED_1999, PED_2009, PED_2015**)
Federal Electoral District (**FED_2011, FED_2016**)
Police Services Respondent Area (**RESP**)
Tourism Region (**TOURISM**)
Games Zone (**GZ**)

LOCATION FIELDS

Each postal code is assigned a Latitude and Longitude location. For postal codes with multiple entries, the best representative location is provided. A location is based on the street address for a postal code and is assigned a location by using the Digital Road Atlas (DRA). Locations are slightly offset the road (left or right) to ensure the correct side of the street is represented. This also helps with coding the geographic regions.

Latitude (**LAT**)
Longitude (**LONG**)

DATE FIELDS

Two fields available will help determine whether a postal code is active or retired. The BIRTH_DATE contains the date (yyyymmdd) that the postal code became active. Alternately, the RET_DATE contains the date (yyyymmdd) that a postal code was retired. All records containing the value 19000001 are "Active" and all other values represent the date the postal code was "Retired".

Birth Date (**BIRTH_DATE**)
Retired Date (**RET_DATE**)

OTHER FIELDS

Below are additional fields included for BC geographies:

Community Name (**COMM_NAME**)⁸

⁷ Returns concatenated School District and 2-digit TEA number

⁸ This field differs from the Census Subdivision name (MUN_NAME) in that it identifies all the small unincorporated communities as well as the incorporated municipalities.

Modified Census Subdivision Name (**COMM_MUN_NAME_2016**)⁹

Modified Full Census Subdivision (**COMM_CDCSD_2016**)¹⁰

⁹ Special field. Some postal codes are geographically located in unorganized areas but, for administrative purposes, people in these regions will identify their municipality as the nearest one, reflected in the COMM_NAME field. Where COMM_NAME is different than MUN_NAME_2016, COMM_MUN_NAME_2016 replaces the value with COMM_NAME

¹⁰ This field contains the full CDCSD but, if COMM_MUN_NAME_2016 is replaced by COMM_NAME, COMM_CDCSD_2016 is adjusted to the COMM_NAME CDCSD


USING THE GCS

LOG-IN

Each client is given a specific user name and password to access the program. These credentials are only to be used by said client and will be required when accessing the application. A client may use the service as often as they like.

APPLICATION

After logging in to the GeoCoding Self Service (GCS) Application, you will see the screen below:


**BC Stats - Geocoding Self-Service**

How to use the Geocoding Self-Service application

1. Select a file to geocode by clicking the Browse button below. The file should be in .csv (comma-separated values) format and include at least one column with a header listing the postal codes to be geocoded.
2. Select the field from your file containing the postal codes to be geocoded.
3. Select the GCS version to use. A new version is released every quarter following the naming convention GCS_YYYYMM.
4. Select the GCS fields you want your postal codes to be geocoded to. Use the Ctrl or Shift key to select multiple entries.
5. Click the 'Geocode Input File' button to begin the process. It should take a few seconds. When geocoding is done, results will appear in a table. Note that the table will always include the 'ACTIVE' field to indicate if a postal code was in use (Y) or retired (N) for the selected GCS version.
6. Click the 'Download Results' button to retrieve a .csv copy of your geocoded postal codes.


GeoCoding Self-Service User Guide

Click the 'Download User Guide' button below to get a PDF copy of the Geocoding Self-Service User Guide. The guide includes detailed instructions and definitions of the fields available.

 Download user guide

GeoCoding Self-Service Fields Lookup Tables

Click the 'Download Lookup Tables' button below to get a copy of the lookup tables. The lookup tables can be used to relate field value returned by the Geocoding Self-Service to a region's full name.

 Download lookup tables

Additional information

Produced by BC Stats
Last updated: September 2019

Data selection

File to geocode (.csv):

Browse... No file selected

Field containing postal codes:


GCS version to use:

GCS_201909

GCS fields to return (Ctrl or Shift for multiple):

MEP_ID
SLI
PROV
COMM_NAME
BIRTH_DATE
RET_DATE
LONGITUDE
LATITUDE
SOURCE
DB_2016
MUN_NAME_2011
CD_2011
CSD_2011
CDCSD_2011
CMACA_2011
DA_2011
CT_2011
DR_2011
DPL_2011
FED_2011

Actions

Geocode input file Reset selection  Download results

Follow the steps below to geocode your input file.

1) Select the file that you want to geocode.

This file can be on your hard drive or on a network drive. It must be a comma-separated (csv) file. The first row of your file must contain headers. One column in your file must contain postal codes. You can convert an Excel list to csv by Saving As and selected csv as the format.

To select the file you want to Geocode, click in the box indicated “Browse...”. You will then be able to navigate to and select the file you want to geocode. The file will be automatically uploaded to the app.

To speed things up, if you have a lot of columns in your file, you may want to save your file to a temporary file and delete all columns in it except for the field containing Postal Codes and perhaps one or two other identifying fields. Once your file has been geocoded, you can then append these geocodes to your original input file.

NOTE: Your file is deleted from the server after your session ends.

2) Indicate what input field contains your Postal Codes

Once your file has been uploaded to the server, the field indicated by “Field containing postal codes” will contain a list of all fields in your input file. Click on this field to obtain a dropdown list of all your fields. Select the field that contains your postal codes.


3) Select the GCS version you want to use

Over time, new postal codes are added, old postal codes are retired, and geographies can change. New versions of the GCS are compiled on a regular basis. GCS versions are identified by the Year and Month they were compiled in. If you click on the box indicated by “GCS version to use”, a list of all GCS versions available to you will be listed. Click on the version of the GCS you want to use to geocode your data. If your data was collected in 2012, for example, you will most likely want to use a GCS compiled in 2012 to geocode it.

4) Select the GCS geocode fields to add to your input file

Once you select a GCS version, a list of fields available in that GCS version will appear in the region of the screen identified by “GCS fields to return”. Select the GCS fields you want your postal codes to be geocoded to. Use the Ctrl or Shift key to select multiple entries.

In the screen shot, GCS version 2012-03 has been selected. This version was created in March of 2012. The user in this example has elected to add the fields CSD, CDCSD and HA to their input file.

**BC Stats**

BC Stats - Geocoding Self-Service

How to use the Geocoding Self-Service application

1. Select a file to geocode by clicking the Browse button below. The file should be in .csv (comma-separated values) format and include at least one column with a header listing the postal codes to be geocoded.
2. Select the field from your file containing the postal codes to be geocoded.
3. Select the GCS version to use. A new version is released every quarter following the naming convention GCS_YYYYMM.
4. Select the GCS fields you want your postal codes to be geocoded to. Use the Ctrl or Shift key to select multiple entries.
5. Click the 'Geocode Input File' button to begin the process. It should take a few seconds. When geocoding is done, results will appear in a table. Note that the table will always include the 'ACTIVE' field to indicate if a postal code was in use (Y) or retired (N) for the selected GCS version.
6. Click the 'Download Results' button to retrieve a .csv copy of your geocoded postal codes.

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[Download user guide](#)

GeoCoding Self-Service Fields Lookup Tables

Click the 'Download Lookup Tables' button below to get a copy of the lookup tables. The lookup tables can be used to relate field value returned by the Geocoding Self-Service to a region's full name.

[Download lookup tables](#)

Additional information

Produced by BC Stats
Last updated: September 2019

Data selection

File to geocode (.csv):

[Browse...](#) postal.csv

Upload complete

Field containing postal codes:

POSTALCODE

GCS version to use:

GCS_201203

GCS fields to return (Ctrl or Shift for multiple):

MEP_ID

SLI

PROV

COMM_NAME

BIRTH_DATE

RET_DATE

LONGITUDE

LATITUDE

MUN_NAME

CD

CSD

CDCSD

CMACA

DA

CT

DR

DPL

HA

HSDA

LHA

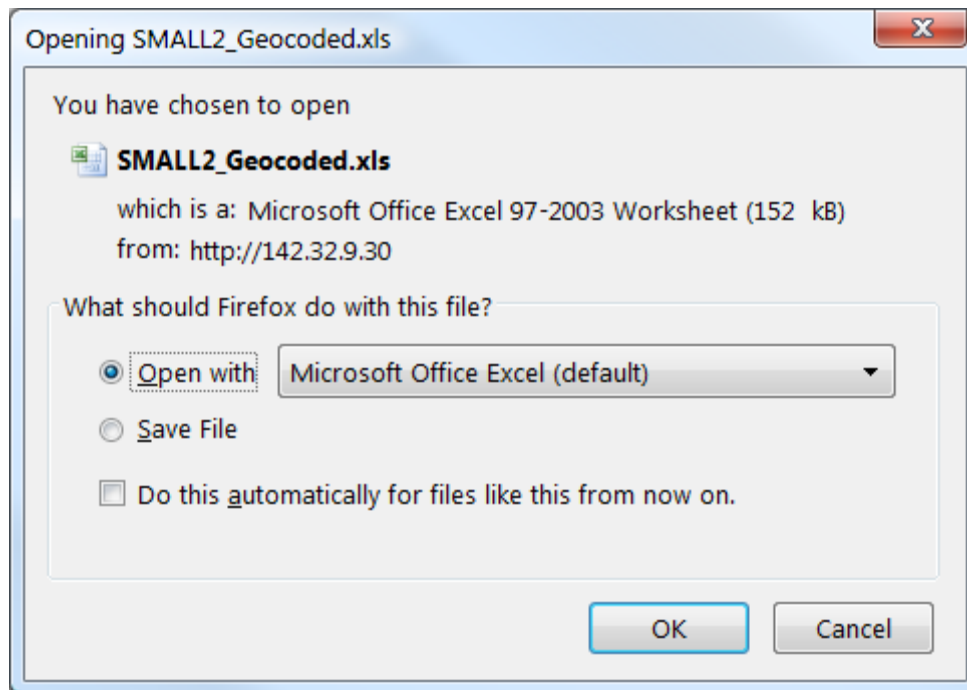
Actions

[Geocode input file](#) [Reset selection](#) [Download results](#)

5) Add GCS geocode fields to your input file

Once you have selected the fields you want to add, click the “Geocode Input File” button, to geocode your file.

Once you click this file, the GCS application will add geocodes to your input file. When this is done, it will automatically display a table with the resulting match for each input postal code. Note that the table will always include the 'ACTIVE' field to indicate if a postal code was in use (Y) or retired (N) for the selected GCS version. Click the 'Download Results' button to retrieve a .csv copy of your geocoded postal codes. You will see the screen below. For a listing of region numbers to names, click the “Download lookup tables” button.



You can choose to either save the file to your local hard drive or view it in Microsoft Excel. **Please note:** If you choose to view your file in Microsoft Excel, you **must** save it to either your local hard drive or a network drive when you are through viewing it. Otherwise it will be lost when you close Excel, and if you need it again you will have to re-geocode your input file.

DATA DICTIONARY

Field Name	Description
Postal Code	<p>A postal code is an alpha-numeric combination of six characters intended to describe the destination of each item of mail addressed in Canada. The code always takes the form of ANA NAN, where "A" represents a letter of the alphabet and "N" a number. The first character of the postal code (allocated in alphabetic sequence from east to west across Canada) represents a province or territory or a major sector entirely within a province. Postal codes in British Columbia always start with a V.</p> <p>The first three characters of the postal code represent a set area known as Forward Sortation Areas (FSA). FSAs are defined differently for urban and rural settings. In urban areas an FSA defines an area of about 25 letter carrier routes (about 120 city blocks in a business section). An FSA code can be identified as urban by the presence of a "1" through "9" in the second position. Rural areas do not have letter carrier delivery. A rural FSA denotes a contiguous area in which there are fewer than 200 small post offices. Rural FSAs are identifiable by the presence of a "0" (zero) in the second position of the FSA code (e.g. V0X is a rural FSA).</p> <p>The last three characters of the postal code denote areas known as Local Delivery Units (LDU). LDUs are also defined differently for urban and rural settings. In established urban areas, the LDU can specify a small and easily defined section within an FSA, such as a block-face (one side of a city street between consecutive intersections), an apartment building, an office building, or a large firm or organization which does a large volume of business with the post office. In new urban growth areas, postal codes are now linked to community mail boxes which can service both odd and even sides of the same street, and even multiple streets, within a 300 meters radius of the community mail box. The LDU in rural areas denotes service from a post office or postal station (e.g. rural routes, general delivery (customer pickup), post office box, or suburban services (contractor delivers)).</p> <p>Canada Post Corporation only uses 20 alpha characters and 10 numeric characters in the postal code. Colons, dashes, oblique strokes, and the letters D F I O Q and U have not been used because of difficulties with optical character recognition equipment.</p> <p>A "0" (zero) in the final position in the LDU code has been reserved as a post office designator. Every postal installation will have a postal code for administrative purposes. This code will also identify whether the installation is a delivery service office or a non-letter carrier office.</p>
Birth Date	This field contains the date the postal code became active (YYYYMMDD format).
Retired Date	This field contains the date the postal code was retired (YYYYMMDD format). To select only active postal codes, set the RET_DATE to 19000001.
Latitude	Latitude is measured from the equator, with positive values going north and negative values going south.

Longitude	Longitude is measured from the Prime Meridian (which is the longitude that runs through Greenwich, England), with positive values going east and negative values going west. Each postal code is assigned a Latitude and Longitude location. For postal codes with multiple entries, the best representative location is provided. A location is based on the street address for a postal code and is assigned a location by using the Digital Road Atlas (DRA). Locations are slightly offset the road (left or right) to ensure the correct side of the street is represented. This also helps with coding the geographic regions.
Census Division	Census Divisions (CD) are the principal geographic areas for the country-wide census and are created by Statistics Canada. There are currently 29 CDs in B.C. (2016 Census). Census Division boundaries in Canada follow counties, regional districts, regional municipalities, and five other types of geographic areas made up of groups of Census Subdivisions (CSDs). In British Columbia the CD is comprised of one unorganized region (Stikine) and 28 Regional Districts which have local government functions. CD boundaries follow Regional Districts, so they are affected by Regional District boundary changes, such as extensions, reductions, name changes, and newly created Regional Districts.
Census Subdivision	<p>Census Subdivisions (CSD) aggregate to Census Divisions (CDs), which in turn aggregate to a province or territory (the province code for British Columbia is 59). This relationship is reflected in the 7-digit Standard Geographical Classification code (SGC). The TMF SGC is slightly different from the Statistics Canada SGC due to the exclusion of the province code. Therefore the TMF value for Census Division and Subdivision is referred to as the two-digit CD code and a three-digit CSD code.</p> <p>As the name implies, a Census Subdivision (CSD) is a sub-unit of a Census Division. Any incorporated municipality including a City (C), District Municipality (DM), Town (T), or Village (VL) is a CSD. Some Indian Reserves (IRs) and other native land areas, such as Settlements (SEs) and Indian Government Districts (IGDs), also have CSD status. The remaining unorganized areas in a CD are then aggregated into further CSDs designated as Regional District Electoral Areas (RDEA's). These aggregations represent the Regional District Electoral Areas as determined at the time of the census. There are currently 29 Census Divisions and 737 Census Subdivisions as of the 2016 Census. It is important to note that not all the 737 CSD's in the province will be represented on the TMF, as the appearance of a CSD on the TMF is dependent upon whether there is a postal code geocoded to that area. Many of the RDEA's and most IRs are not represented on the TMF.</p> <p>Census Subdivision boundaries follow municipalities, so they are modified by municipal boundary changes. These changes can take the form of extensions, reductions, new incorporations, or name changes. Note that the numeric value of a CSD has no meaning unless it is associated with its CD value.</p>
Census Subdivision Name	Refers to the geographic name of the municipality, regional district electoral area or reserve as reflected in the Census.

Census Metropolitan Area or Census Agglomeration Area	<p>A census metropolitan area (CMA) or a census agglomeration (CA) is formed by one or more adjacent municipalities centered on a population center (known as the core). A CMA must have a total population of at least 100,000 of which 50,000 or more must live in the core based on adjusted data from the previous Census of Population Program. A CA must have a core population of at least 10,000 also based on data from the previous Census of Population Program.</p> <p>To be included in the CMA or CA, other adjacent municipalities must have a high degree of integration with the core, as measured by commuting flows derived from data on place of work from the previous Census Program.</p>
Dissemination Area	<p>The DA refers to the basic census data dissemination unit, previously developed for census collection purposes. Being the smallest standard census geographic unit, the DA is the building block of geostatistical areas. The number of households in a dissemination area generally varies between a minimum of 125 households in rural areas to a maximum of 4000 in large urban areas. Dissemination areas never cut across a geographic area recognized by the census.</p> <p>An individual DA value means nothing without its corresponding CD value. Like the CD/CSD relationship, DAs aggregate to CD's. Several DA's in the province will have the same value, but each CD/DA code is unique.</p>
Census Tract	<p>A Census Tract (CT) refers to a permanent small census geostatistical area established in large urban communities with the help of local specialists interested in urban and social science research. Census tracts are reviewed and approved by Statistics Canada according to the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the boundaries must follow permanent and easily recognized lines on the ground; (b) the population must be between 2,500 and 10,000 with a preferred average of 5,000 persons, except for census tracts in the central business districts, major industrial zones, or in peripheral rural or urban areas that may have either a lower or higher population; (c) the area must be as homogeneous as possible in terms of economic status and social living conditions; and (d) the shape must be as compact as possible. <p>All census metropolitan areas and all census agglomerations with a census subdivision having a population of 50,000 or more at the previous census are eligible for a census tract program. Once an urban center is added to the program, it is retained even if its population subsequently declines.</p> <p>Generally, census tracts are assigned a 4-digit number in ascending sequence within a CMA or CA. Where a census tract is split into two or more parts, the 4-digit number is followed by a decimal point and a further 2 digits identifying the splits, e.g. 0309.01 or 0309.02 (If there is no split, it is shown as "0309.00").</p> <p>To uniquely identify a CT, you must pair up the 7-digit CT number with the 3-digit CMACA number. (e.g. CT 0001.00 can be in Kelowna 9150001.00 or Kamloops 9250001.00.)</p>

Dissemination Block	<p>A dissemination block (DB) is an area bounded on all sides by roads and/or boundaries of standard geographic areas. The dissemination block is the smallest geographic area for which population and dwelling counts are disseminated.</p> <p>Highway medians, ramp areas and other irregular polygons may form dissemination blocks on their own. A morphological dissemination block is split to form two or more DBs wherever it is traversed by the boundaries of selected standard geographic areas. This makes it possible to aggregate dissemination block data to all higher level standard geographic areas. In 2011, DB boundaries had to respect the following standard geographic areas: federal electoral districts (FEDs), census subdivisions (CSDs), census tracts (CTs), designated places (DPLs) and dissemination areas (DAs). The 2016 DBs must respect three additional standard geographic areas: namely health regions (HRs), local health integration networks (LHNs) and previous census population centers (POPCTRs). In rural areas where the road network is sparse or even non-existent, the boundaries of collection blocks are used to avoid creating very large dissemination blocks.</p> <p>Each dissemination block is assigned a three-digit code. To uniquely identify each dissemination block in Canada, the two-digit province/territory (PR) code, the two-digit census division (CD) code and the four-digit dissemination area (DA) code must precede the DB code.</p>
Designated Place Name Listing	A DPL is a small community or settlement that does not meet the criteria of a municipality yet has been defined geographically with local input to establish locality boundaries.
Population Centre	A population centre (POPCTR) has a population of at least 1,000 and a population density of 400 persons or more per square kilometer, based on population counts from the current Census of Population. All areas outside population centres are classified as rural areas. Taken together, population centres and rural areas cover all of Canada.
Development Region	There are 8 Development Regions (DR) in the province which are aggregates of Regional Districts, or Census Divisions. The boundaries are essentially static, following established geographic regions and natural physical constraints. The DR's reflect an attempt to represent homogeneous areas irrespective of population density.
Health Authority	B.C. has five regional health authorities that are defined based on geographic boundaries: Interior, Fraser, Vancouver Coastal, Vancouver Island, and Northern. In addition to the regional health authorities, there is Provincial Health Services Authority and the First Nations Health Authority, which are not defined by geographic boundaries.
Health Service Delivery Area	Regional health authorities comprise of smaller regions known as Health Service Delivery Areas (HSDAs). There are 16 HSDAs within the province. HSDA's are given a two-digit value with the first digit signifying the Health Authority it falls within. For example, HSDA 11, 12, 13 and 14 all fall within Health Authority 1, HSDA 21, 22 and 23 falls within Health Authority 2.
Local Health Area	Health Service Delivery Areas comprise of smaller regions known as Local Health Areas (LHAs). There are 89 LHAs within the province. In April 2019, the Ministry of Health renumbered the Local Health Areas to be three digits with the first two digits signifying the Health Service Delivery Area it falls within.

Community Health Service Area	Local Health Areas comprise of smaller regions known as Community Health Service Areas (CHSAs). There are 218 CHSAs within the province. These were introduced to the health boundary classification in April 2019. Community Health Service Areas are four digits with the first three digits signifying the Local Health Area it falls within.
Pre-2018 Local Health Area	<p>* Pre-2018 Local Health Area are not in use as of 2018 and are included for historical purposes only.</p> <p>As of 2017, there were 89 Local Health Areas (LHAs) covering British Columbia. They originally evolved from school district boundaries; however, LHA boundaries do not reflect any school districts boundary changes that have occurred since their inception. The LHA field also contains codes for LHAs 161-166 which are really subdivisions of LHA 39 (Vancouver), and are used primarily by the GCS for geocoding postal codes. The LHAs are determined on a geographic basis and have no administrative functions. Instead they aggregate up to regional Health Service Delivery Areas and Health Authorities and therefore provide estimates of population that can be used in planning to project bed needs and other health care facility requirements.</p>
Micro Health Area	<p>* Micro Health Area are not in use as of 2018 and are included for historical purposes only.</p> <p>Further to the development of the LHAs, the South Fraser Valley Regional Health Board requested that LHAs Langley (35), Surrey (36), and Delta (37), be divided into even smaller regions for their own analytical purposes and for population estimates. The three LHA's were divided into the following number of smaller regions called Micro Health Areas (MHA): Langley (5 MHAs), Surrey (5 MHAs), and Delta (3 MHAs). Thus, MHA's exist only for Langley, Surrey, and Delta. The boundaries of the MHA's were created using aggregates of Census Tracts, and in the case of Langley City MHA, the municipal boundary for Langley City. These fields are not generally available and are used for Ministry of Health analysis only.</p>
Ministry of Children and Family Region	There are 4 MCFD Regions in the province, which are the responsibility of the Ministry of Children and Family Development. The ministry is responsible for governing and administering provincial programs and highly specialized services throughout the province.
Ministry of Children and Family Service Delivery Area	Like the Health structure MCFD has implemented sub-regions. These regions were defined in 2010 and aggregate to the Regional level. The Service Delivery Areas (SDA) are comprised of two digits, the first digit signifying the Region; the second signifying the SDA
Ministry of Children and Family Local Service Area	Even smaller than the SDA's are the Local Service Areas (LSA). These LSA's are identified by a four-digit number, the first being the region, the second the SDA and the last two are the LSA. This numbering system allows for quick and easy aggregation from the smallest level (LSA) up to the Regional level.
College Region	There are 15 College Regions in the province, which are the responsibility of the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training. They are generally named for the largest university/college in the region. The boundaries, in most cases, follow School Districts or aggregates of School Districts. These regions are primarily used for administrative purposes.

School District	<p>A School District (SD) is a geographic area created or constituted as a School District by or under the School Act for the purposes of educational administration. The boundaries are determined by order of the Lieutenant Governor in Council and each is governed by an elected board of school trustees. There are 59 School Districts in the province as of December 2, 1996. These replace the previous 75 SDs by amalgamations of some areas. A translation of old School Districts to new School Districts is provided in the appendix.</p> <p>The board of school trustees is a corporate body elected by registered voters in the province. Trustees are elected for a four-year term and may be re-elected in subsequent local general elections. Local general elections for school trustees are held every three years on the third Saturday of November commencing in 1990.</p> <p>School boards have a duty to govern districts and their schools in accordance with specified powers in a fiscally responsible and cost-effective manner. They have a responsibility to ensure that schools provide students with opportunities for a quality education while focusing on the following areas of district concern:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) implementation of provincial and local education programs; (2) school finance and facilities; (3) student access and achievement; (4) teaching performance; and (5) accountability to parents, taxpayers, the community and to the province. SD boundaries are determined by order of the Lieutenant Governor in Council, on the recommendation of the Minister of Education, after consultation with the citizens, Regional Districts, municipal councils and school boards concerned. Boundaries are determined based upon several factors including geography, demographics, and population centres.
Trustee Electoral Area	<p>As per the School Act, there is to be a board of education for each school district consisting of 3, 5, 7 or 9 trustees and each School District is divided accordingly. The Elections of all trustees, to be known collectively as a general school election, was held in the year 2014 and in every 4th year after that. See School District for more information.</p>

Provincial Electoral District	<p>There are 87 Provincial Electoral Districts in the province as of 2015. They are the responsibility of Elections British Columbia. Each PED elects one Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) to represent them in the House. The 1999 and 2009 PED's will be maintained on the TMF for historical purposes.</p> <p>The boundaries for the PEDs change based on population distribution. The new boundaries are determined by an appointed commission according to the following criteria set out in the Electoral Boundaries Commission Act:</p> <p>(1) that the principle of representation by population be achieved, recognizing the imperatives imposed by geographical and demographic realities, the legacy of our history and the need to balance the community interests of the people of the province;</p> <p>(2) to achieve that principle, the commission be permitted to deviate from a common statistical Provincial electoral quota by no more than 25%, plus or minus;</p> <p>(3) the commission would be permitted to exceed the 25% deviation principle where it considers that very special circumstances exist (e.g. a smaller population within a very large area).</p>
Federal Electoral District	<p>There are 42 Federal Electoral Ridings in the province and are defined by the 2013 Representation Order, which came into effect for the 2014 general elections. Representation in the House of Commons is based on these geographical divisions. The number of electoral districts is established through a formula set out in the Constitution Act, and one member of Parliament (MP) is elected in each electoral district. Since 1964, independent commissions have been entrusted with adjusting the riding boundaries, based on population changes and other factors. For the 10 provinces, new commissions are set up after every 10-year census to make any necessary revisions to existing boundaries, following the criteria set out in the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act.</p>
Police Services Respondent Area	<p>Respondent codes are used by the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics to designate agency sources for police data. In BC there are 197 respondent codes representing all of BC's active policing jurisdictions. These include 12 Independent Municipal Forces, 64 RCMP Municipal Forces, and 121 jurisdictions or detachments policed by the RCMP Provincial Force.</p> <p>Respondent codes identify municipal, provincial and federal police departments and by extension detachments and policing jurisdictions within larger forces, e.g., Royal Canadian Mounted Police. These codes source police enforcement activities to a specific geographical location.</p> <p>Respondent codes are comprised of five digits. The first two identify the province in which police enforcement activities have occurred while the last three digits specifically identify the geographic location or policing jurisdiction where those activities took place. For example, 59023 identify BC (59) as the province where enforcement occurred and 023 indicates the enforcement activity occurred in the policing jurisdiction of Vancouver.</p>
Tourism Region	<p>British Columbia is divided into six tourism regions. Five are managed by Regional Destination Marketing Organizations in partnership with Destination BC; one (Vancouver, coast and Mountains) is managed by Destination BC directly.</p>

Games Zone	The Province has been divided into eight Zones for participation in the Games to ensure that the BC Summer and BC Winter Games include participants from every part of the Province. The Zones also help support each Provincial Sport Organization's work to spread their efforts and interest throughout the Province. The boundaries of the three lower mainland zones were redrawn in 2015 to reflect the change in population.
Community Name	The community name is a character field listing the community name as it would appear in Canada Post Corporation's Postal Code Directory.
Modified Census Subdivision Name	Special field. Some postal codes are geographically located outside of the 162 BC municipalities in what are called unorganized areas. For administrative purposes, Canada Post and people in these regions generally identify their municipality of residence as the closest one. This information is reflected in the Community Name field obtained from Canada Post. Because of this, postal codes in unorganized areas are associated with a Municipality Name (or Census Subdivision Name) that is not truly a municipality responsible of delivering services. Where the Community Name is different from the Census Subdivision Name, the Community Name replaces the Census Subdivision Name. This modified field represents the municipality people living in a certain postal code associate with for service delivery purposes, even if they might not be geographically within its boundaries.
Modified Full Census Subdivision	This field contains the full Census Subdivision associated with the Modified Census Subdivision Name.