

Load shedding also holds unexpected, adverse financial implications for the municipality and its residents.

South Africa reached a critical stage regarding electricity supply when Eskom implemented phase six load shedding on Monday 9 December. This after Greater Knysna, and the rest of South Africa, had already been affected by load shedding of up to phase four.

Load shedding is frustrating on many levels, but Knysna Municipal Manager Dr Sitembele Vatala warns that if it continues this severely, it may have more of an impact than one realises. “Higher phases of load shedding places immense strain on our infrastructure and resources, and might even start to affect services like electricity and water supply, as well as works at the wastewater treatment plant,” he said.

Municipal electricity infrastructure could be severely damaged due to power surges when Eskom’s supply is cut or reinstated, which would have a negative impact on the municipality’s ability to provide this service – once the power is back on.

“Our water reticulation service is arguably one of the most important that we deliver. But many of our pumping stations are at a standstill during load shedding, which means that we are unable to fill our reservoirs from our water sources. I urge all residents and holiday makers to please use water very sparingly. This resource is already under a lot of pressure, and continued load shedding may inhibit our ability to provide access to it.” Should the load shedding continue the Municipality will consider the reintroduction of higher level water restrictions to conserve water and reduce the load on the sewer treatment works.

“Our wastewater treatment works is a prime example of a system placed under a lot of strain during load shedding,” he continued. “Sewerage pump stations must be manually overridden at least 30 minutes prior to the implementation of load shedding for technical and practical reasons. This is but one instance of extra manpower required to ensure the smooth running of all services, as far as is reasonably possible.”

Load shedding also holds unexpected, adverse financial implications for the municipality. Not only is there the additional manpower necessary for various added manual actions to consider, but also the costs associated with the rental and purchasing of equipment like generators and the fuel necessary to power them.

“It must be made very clear that Eskom is the electricity supplier to this municipality,” said Vatala. “We are responsible for providing access to this service and its reticulation. However, if we are not supplied any electricity from Eskom, our hands are tied. Many residents vent their frustration at the sudden changes in the load shedding schedule on the municipality. Unfortunately we are often notified of intended load shedding, or changes in the schedule, after such have already been implemented. It is also common knowledge that the utility does not always adhere to its own schedule.”

While Eskom does not strictly keep to load shedding time tables, it is possible to find your area’s status and schedule online at www.loadshedding.eskom.co.za. Smartphone users may also download an app that offers the same functionality.

“I can guarantee our residents and visitors that we are investigating – and implementing – counter measures to ensure that our services are delivered as far as possible,” said Vatala. “In the meantime, make sure that your security systems are sufficient, that your solar lights and cell phones are charged, that you have extra candles and matches, and a good supply of braai wood and firelighters. And enjoy your well-deserved vacation.”

How it works

This excerpt from an article posted on www.thesouthafrican.com on 9 December 2019 explains what happens during the four phases or stages of load shedding.

Stage 1 allows for up to 1 000 MW of the national load to be shed. Requires the least amount of load shedding, three times over a four-day period for two hours at a time, or 3 times over an eight-day period for four hours at a time.

Stage 2 allows for up to 2 000 MW of the national load to be shed. Doubles the frequency of Stage 1, which means you will be scheduled for load shedding six times over a four-day period for two hours at a time, or six times over an eight-day period for four hours at a time.

Stage 3 allows for up to 3 000 MW of the national load to be shed. Increases the frequency of Stage 2 by 50%, which means you will be scheduled for load shedding nine times over a four-day period for two hours at a time, or nine times over an eight-day period for four hours at a time.

Stage 4 allows for up to 4 000 MW of the national load to be shed. Doubles the frequency of Stage 2, which means you will be scheduled for load shedding 12 times over a four-day period for two hours at a time, or 12 times over an eight-day period for four hours at a time.

Find the full article by Luke Daniel at <https://www.thesouthafrican.com/news/eskom-load-shedding-schedule-2019/>

ENDS

Knysna Municipality Communications Department

P O Box 21, Knysna. 6570. Western Cape. South Africa

Tel +27 (0)44 302 6300 (switchboard) or 302 6430 (direct)

e-mail dnkume@knysna.gov.za