

Residents asked to reduce usage as water restrictions remain in place

Knysna Municipal Manager Dr Lulamile Mapholoba has asked residents to drastically reduce water consumption in the face of the ongoing low rainfall conditions. "Residents are reminded that level three water restrictions are still in place," he said. "The water restriction level may have to be escalated if rainfall patterns and associated river flow do not improve significantly. I urge residents to drastically reduce consumption so that we can avoid the need to increase restrictions - and punitive tariffs."

While much of the Garden Route enjoyed good rainfall over the weekend, prevailing weather conditions do not present, nor predict, a break in the ongoing dry conditions.

"Council declared a local drought disaster in terms of Section 55 of the Disaster Management Act, Act 57 of 2002, on 23 March 2017," Mapholoba explained. "This was supported by the Garden Route District Municipality and the Provincial Government. Consequently, level three water restrictions were implemented in July 2017."

The following apply under level three water restrictions:

- municipal potable water is for human consumption only;
- the watering of gardens is prohibited (the use of hosepipes, irrigation systems, watering cans, buckets or any other receptacle for gardening and other purposes is not allowed);
- the washing of vehicles and/or boats is not allowed;
- domestic consumption must be limited to 20 Kl per household per month, and water restricting/management devices will be installed for transgressors;
- business consumption is to be reduced by 30% on the previous year's monthly average consumption (except car washes), and water restricting/management devices will be installed for transgressors;
- the construction industry, car washes and nurseries are to use alternative sources of water;
- health and correctional facilities are to install their own tanks that will be filled by municipal tankers;
- areas where households receive a free basic water allocation will be limited to 6kl per household per month (200 litres per household per day);
- flow restrictors are to be installed in all standpipes;
- the stage two drought tariff is triggered; and
- penalties will be issued for violations.

"Remember that there is a difference between water restriction levels and drought situation levels," said Mapholoba. "Water restrictions are regulatory measures that tell us how to manage our water consumption during times of scarcity. Drought situation levels are tiered tariff- and water supply management measures that are implemented to control levels of water consumption relevant and appropriate to varying degrees of water scarcity."

"This is not new news," he concluded. "We have been living under these conditions since 2017. We must be reminded that our water is scarce, and that we must use it sparingly and with respect. Water restrictions are not a punishment, but a way of conserving this precious resource. And, if you adhere to the restrictions, you will not be subject to punitive measures. While we cannot control the weather, we can control our water usage. The possibility of escalating water restrictions is also not a threat, but an unfortunate reality if we do not change our habits while these weather conditions continue."

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