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Greater Knysna gears up for the summer season

Knysna Municipality is ready to welcome residents and visitors to Greater Knysna for the festive and summer season, with additional personnel and operational measures being put in place to support public safety, service delivery and the increased demand on municipal services.

The Integrated Seasonal Readiness Plan for 2026/2027 will run from 1 November 2026 to 31 January 2027. It brings together the various municipal directorates to coordinate resources and ensure that essential services, public spaces and municipal infrastructure are appropriately managed during one of the busiest periods of the year.

Acting Municipal Manager, Dr Richard Martin, said particular attention will be given to public safety, essential services and the protection of the area's natural environment. “We also appeal to residents and visitors to play their part by acting responsibly, respecting municipal by-laws and helping us protect what makes Knysna such a special place," he said.

Public safety, traffic and law enforcement

Municipal Law Enforcement Officers will be supported by 16 Peace Officers. An additional 30 seasonal Law Enforcement Officers and 20 seasonal Point Duty Officers will strengthen operational capacity.

Point Duty Officers will assist with traffic flow and congestion at busy intersections and key routes, particularly in areas experiencing increased seasonal activity. Law Enforcement teams will focus on compliance with municipal by-laws, public spaces, tourist hotspots and beaches.

Motorists are urged to obey all traffic rules and never drive under the influence of alcohol or other intoxicating substances. Patience and consideration for other road users will contribute to safer journeys for everyone.

Waste management

The increased number of visitors places additional pressure on refuse collection and waste management services. An additional 12 casual workers will assist with refuse collection. The municipality will also appoint a further 20 Expanded Public Works Programme workers.

Residents are advised that refuse collection arrangements will be adjusted over the festive period. Collection on Wednesday, 16 December 2026, will continue as normal. Collections scheduled for Friday, 25 December 2026 (Christmas Day), will take place on Saturday, 26 December 2026, while collections scheduled for Friday, 1 January 2027 (New Year's Day), will take place on Saturday, 2 January 2027.

Residents and visitors are encouraged to dispose of waste responsibly, use designated refuse bins and avoid illegal dumping. Keeping our streets, beaches, public spaces and natural areas clean is a shared responsibility.

Fire and emergency services

The Fire and Emergency Services' full-time staff are ready to respond to emergencies during the summer season. Particular attention will be given to fire prevention and preparedness as we enter the fire season.

Residents and visitors are urged to exercise extreme caution when dealing with open flames, braais and other potential sources of ignition. Never leave a fire unattended, ensure that fires are completely extinguished and avoid discarding burning cigarettes or other materials that could start a veld fire.

Informal settlements are particularly vulnerable to fire incidents during the festive and summer period because of high housing density, informal electrical connections and the use of open flames for cooking and heating.

Human Settlements

The Human Settlements Directorate will assist households affected by fire in accordance with applicable municipal policies. This includes coordinating the necessary response and support arrangements such as emergency shelter, transitional housing assistance for elderly affected residents and on-the-ground coordination of relief efforts. Assistance will be subject to the relevant policy provisions and eligibility requirements.

Lifeguard services

A total of 28 lifeguards will be deployed at beaches from 1 December 2026 to 31 January 2027. Beachgoers are strongly encouraged to swim in designated areas where lifeguards are on duty, follow their instructions and pay attention to warning flags and changing sea conditions.

Children must always be supervised near water. Swimming after consuming alcohol or other intoxicating substances is strongly discouraged. Never take unnecessary risks in the water or underestimate changing sea conditions.

Compliance with municipal by-laws

Knysna Municipality will adopt a zero-tolerance approach to violations of municipal by-laws throughout the festive season. Law Enforcement Officers will monitor public spaces, beaches, roads and recreational facilities, and take appropriate enforcement action against offenders.

Residents and visitors are reminded that the following by-laws will be enforced:

- Knysna Roads and Traffic By-law, regulating road use, traffic-related conduct, parking and public safety.
- Knysna Public Nuisances By-law, addressing conduct that causes public nuisance or affects the peace, safety and comfort of others.
- Knysna Public Amenities By-law, regulating the use and protection of municipal public amenities and recreational spaces.

Everyone is expected to respect municipal facilities, public spaces and the rights of others. Non-compliance will not be tolerated, and enforcement action will be taken where by-laws are contravened.

Parks and recreation

The Parks and Recreation Department is increasing its operational capacity to maintain municipal parks, recreational facilities and public spaces during the busy summer period.

A total of 30 temporary staff members will assist with the upkeep and general maintenance of recreational areas, ensuring that residents and visitors can enjoy these facilities throughout the festive season.

Residents are advised of the following operating arrangements for municipal cemeteries during the December 2026 and January 2027 office closure period.

During the municipal office closure, the Hunters Home Cemetery's operating hours will be from 08h00 to 12h00.

Saturday funeral arrangements require bookings to be finalised by Wednesday at 12h00.

Municipal cemeteries will be closed on public holidays. Cemetery visiting hours are Monday to Friday and Sundays from 08h00 to 17h00, and Saturdays from 08h00 to 14h00.

On Saturdays, the Vigilance Drive entrance gate will be used from 09h00, with the Marlin Drive gate serving as the exit during funerals. From 14h00 to 17h00 on Saturdays, access will be through the Marlin Drive gate.

Visitors are requested to respect cemetery rules and arrangements and to keep the grounds clean. See full notice at https://www.knysna.gov.za/news/notices/

Land use management and building control

Residents, applicants and industry professionals are advised that temporary arrangements and closing dates will apply to land use and building control applications during the festive period. These arrangements, including the relevant submission deadlines and service resumption dates, have been published in a separate municipal public notice. The public is encouraged to take note and plan accordingly. See full notice at https://www.knysna.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2026/11/Public-Notice-for-the-closure-of-applications-of-Land-Use-Management-and-Building-Control-over-the-2026-Festive-Season.pdf

Roads and stormwater

The Roads and Stormwater Department has appointed 20 casual workers for the period from 16 November to 23 December 2026 to assist with planned maintenance activities. The department is also in the process of appointing two small contractors who will be incorporated into the maintenance programme. This additional capacity is intended to accelerate implementation and, where possible, expand the maintenance priority list. Approval has also been requested for employees to work additional hours. Once approved, this will further assist in accelerating the programme.

A review will be conducted towards the end of November to assess progress and determine whether any adjustments to the December programme are necessary. An amended programme will be issued should changes be required.

Given that the programme has been developed around all available resources, routine complaints and non-urgent service requests received during this period will be carried over to the new year. Residents are nevertheless encouraged to continue reporting faults and service-related problems through the municipality's official Customer Care channels to ensure that they are properly recorded and allocated a reference number.

The available channels are:
Collaborator Citizen App: Download the application from the Google Play Store, Apple App Store or Huawei App Gallery.
Email: customercare@knysna.gov.za.

Residents must provide their contact details, the nature of the problem and the location of the incident. A municipal reference number should be obtained for every reported service request.

Urgent faults and emergencies, particularly those involving water infrastructure, flooding or public safety, should be reported immediately through the relevant emergency and departmental contact numbers below.

Water and wastewater

Although significant upgrades have been made to Knysna's water infrastructure, the summer season, increased demand and the potential impact of El Niño conditions will place additional pressure on already strained water resources.

Akkerkloof Dam is currently approximately 92% full, compared with only 15% at the same time last year. While this is an encouraging improvement, it does not mean that water conservation is any less important.

Level 2 water restrictions remain in place, and all residents, businesses and visitors are urged to comply with these restrictions and use water sparingly.

Simple actions such as repairing leaking taps, avoiding unnecessary water use, limiting excessive irrigation and being mindful of household consumption can make a meaningful difference.

Residents are also requested to report burst pipes, leaking connections and damaged water infrastructure as soon as they become aware of them. Early reporting allows the municipality to respond and limit unnecessary water losses.

Understanding El Niño and preparing for hot weather

El Niño is a natural climate phenomenon associated with the periodic warming of sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean. It influences weather patterns across different parts of the world and can contribute to hotter and drier conditions in southern Africa.

While the precise local effects can vary, residents and visitors should remain mindful of the increased risks associated with prolonged hot weather, particularly dehydration, heat exhaustion, heatstroke and veld fires.

The municipality encourages everyone to take the following precautions:

- Drink sufficient water throughout the day, even when you are not feeling thirsty.
- Avoid prolonged exposure to direct sunlight, particularly during the hottest part of the day.
- Wear light clothing, a hat and sunscreen when outdoors.
- Never leave children or elderly people unattended in parked vehicles, even for a short period.
- Check regularly on elderly family members, neighbours and other vulnerable people during periods of extreme heat.
- Ensure that pets have access to clean drinking water and adequate shade. Never leave animals inside parked vehicles.
- Avoid strenuous outdoor activities during peak temperatures.
- Be alert to signs of heat exhaustion and heatstroke and seek medical assistance when necessary.
- Exercise additional caution when using open flames, braais and other potential sources of fire.

Hot, dry and windy conditions can increase the risk of veld fires. Report fires immediately and do not attempt to tackle fires that are beyond your ability to control safely.

Events, festivals and things to do in Greater Knysna

The festive season offers an opportunity to discover and enjoy everything that Greater Knysna has to offer. From its breathtaking natural beauty and outdoor adventures to its vibrant local attractions, events and experiences, there is something for residents and visitors to enjoy.

For information on attractions, activities, events and experiences, visit www.visitknysna.co.za to plan your stay and explore the destination.

Martin emphasised that municipal readiness could only go so far without the cooperation and consideration of the public. "Our responsibility is to ensure that our services and personnel are ready to support the community throughout the season. However, keeping Greater Knysna safe, clean and welcoming is something we must all take responsibility for. I ask residents and visitors to respect our rules, look out for one another, protect our natural environment and treat our municipal facilities with care."

Residents and visitors are reminded to travel safely, be considerate of other road users, respect the environment and leave public spaces as they found them. Be safe. Travel safely. Protect Knysna's treasures. Leave only footprints.

Knysna Municipality wishes all residents and visitors a safe, enjoyable and memorable festive season.

Important contact numbers

Residents and visitors are encouraged to save the following numbers for assistance during the festive season.

Municipal Switchboard | 044 302 6300
Fire and Emergency Services | 044 302 8911
Fire and Emergency WhatsApp | 060 998 6969
Traffic and Law Enforcement | 060 998 7022 & 060 998 7119
Water Helpdesk | 044 302 6331 & 044 302 6334
Water Helpdesk WhatsApp | 060 998 7032
Roads and Stormwater | 044 302 6334
SAPS Knysna | 10111
Provincial Traffic | 044 382 5525
Ambulance Services | 10177 or 112
NSRI | 082 990 5956

ENDS

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