



CITY OF JOHANNESBURG
Councillor Anthony Still
MMC: EISD

Councillor Anthony Still, Member of the Mayoral Committee (MMC) for Environment and Infrastructure Services Department (EISD) in the City of Johannesburg

Press Release - Update on water restrictions in Johannesburg

Thursday, October 13, 2016

Embargo: None

The City of Johannesburg will introduce stronger water restrictions to achieve the required 15% reduction in its water consumption. The City initially responded with a reduction of 4.6% but has regressed to a 3.5% and then a 1.2% reduction in consumption per week since the announcement of stricter level 2 water restrictions last month. This is far below the target and a cause for concern. The City is expected to reduce usage by 15% following a Government Gazette notice by the National Department of Water and Sanitation to curtail the extraction of water for urban use from the Integrated Vaal River System by 15%. This is in response to declining water levels in the system. Dams in the system have declined to 51%, while the Vaal dam is dipping below 30%. If the Vaal Dam drops below 20% the take out pumping points are compromised.

Consequences for non-adherence

The immediate consequences are more severe restrictions by Johannesburg Water until the full reduction of 15% in water demand is achieved and maintained. The outflow of water from its reservoirs and water towers will be reduced to affect consumer behavior and to protect its reticulation infrastructure. These measures will result in reduced flow due to less pressure in the system. The system will still have water but at a restricted rate. Some areas may experience low flow or the lack of water when consumers in that area do not reduce their consumption. Johannesburg Water will adopt a targeted approach in determining where decreases in consumption are required.

The insufficient decrease in water consumption in the City so far indicates a lack of appreciation for the precarious position the City and the region are in. The initial saving of 4.6% in the first

week, after our announcement last month, has been erased with the onset of warmer weather. It seems that water for gardening, which is the most discretionary of all usages, has not been sufficiently curtailed. As stated before, more than 40% of potable water in Gauteng is used for gardening purposes.

Revised level-2 water restrictions

The City hereby stipulates that according to section 44 (3) of the Water Services By-law residents are to comply with the following level-2 water restrictions.

- No use of any irrigation or sprinkler systems for watering of gardens with municipal water. Watering only before 06h00 or after 18h00 with a hand held hosepipe.
- No filling of pools with municipal water. Top up to allow filter to work only. It is recommended that pool owners invest in a cover as this significantly reduces evaporation – which is at over 1.2 metres per annum for the average pool.
- No washing of cars and cleaning paved areas with a hose pipe using municipal water.

By-law enforcement

By-law enforcement will be continued by the Johannesburg Metro Police Department. Since 5 September 2016 a total of 139 notices and 182 fines have been issued to those not adhering to the level-2 water restrictions, as required by section 44 (3) of the Water Services By-law. It is requested that residents continue to assist the JMPD in tracking down transgressors. The 24/7 number is 011 758-9650.

Efforts to reduce losses by Johannesburg Water

Johannesburg Water's productivity improvement efforts are starting to yield visible results. The repairs and maintenance teams have improved response times to leaks and bursts by 4%, although there was an increase of 18% in reported incidents. This might not seem like much but it is a huge savings in water and in the reduction of water supply interruptions.

What will happen if demand does not reduce by 15%?

If these measures are not effective in reducing demand by 15% then the Johannesburg Water will have to implement level-3 water restriction which entails water rationing. This is undesirable as it would cause wide scale water service disruption and extensive damage to the water infrastructure which can result in significant water losses. A further possibility is to invoke a penalty tariff on a per household consumption where consumption does not decrease as opposed to the current surcharge tariff on consumption above 20 000 litres/household/month.

We strongly appeal to the residents of Johannesburg to realize that we are in a serious situation and to come on board in a spirit of community awareness and cooperation on this matter.

Statement issued by:

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