

CITY OF CAPE TOWN

22 MAY 2017

MEDIA RELEASE

CRITICAL WARNING TO ALL WATER USERS IN CAPE TOWN

Drought crisis warning: Water use must be brought down by 100 million litres immediately

Dam storage levels are now at 20,7%, which is 0,7% down from a week ago. With the last 10% of a dam's water mostly not being useable, dam levels are effectively at 10,7%. Consumption disappointingly remains at 93 million litres above the consumption target of 600 million litres. Read more below:

Water is only permitted for essential use.

The metro, as the largest water user of the Western Cape Water Supply System, has achieved the 20% savings target set by the National Department of Water and Sanitation. We thank all residents, businesses and government departments for their water saving efforts but we simply have to do a lot more as consumption remains too high.

We are asking all water users to reduce their water usage to 100 litres per person per day.

Cape Town is experiencing the harsh impacts of climate change, with reduced annual average rainfall and abnormal water patterns. No sufficient rain is predicted for the next three weeks.

In terms of stepping up our response to water leaks and complaints, the City of Cape Town has allocated R22 million to employ additional staff for our first-line response teams who are deployed to attend to water faults reported to our call centre.

Approximately 75 additional staff members have been employed to improve our response time to water complaints. These teams are able to identify the problem, do some repairs and/or isolate the leak, and call in the appropriate level of response to do major repairs.

The additional staff members are also deployed to deal with any water management device complaints and faults.

Since the implementation of water restrictions, the City's call centre and first-line response teams have been inundated with calls about water faults and leaks.

The City's staff attend to approximately 800 water and sanitation complaints related to water leaks and faults on a daily basis and teams are doing all they can to expedite their response to water complaints. Teams prioritise cases and are sent to the sites where the most losses occur first to minimise the amount of water being lost.

'As it pertains to the City, we continue to use all current means to drive down consumption. There are some residents in this city who have already cut their consumption down to one-third of what they used to use, but others have seemingly taken the decision that their needs are more important than anyone else's. We will continue to crack down on those water users. Every single water user must use less than 100 litres per person per day. This is not negotiable,' said the City's Mayoral Committee Member for Informal Settlements, Water and Waste Services; and Energy, Councillor Xanthea Limberg.

The City is continuing large-scale pressure reduction programmes across Cape Town to force down consumption. Other emergency interventions are under way and as dam levels decline, the City will start to implement a lifeline supply which entails reducing the water pressure to a very low level across the metro. Furthermore, the City is actively monitoring the use of the top 100 residential users to ensure that corrective measures are taken.

Residents are reminded to use water only for drinking, washing and cooking:

- Only flush the toilet when necessary. Don't use it as a dustbin. 'If it's yellow, let it mellow. If it's brown, flush it down'
- Take a short two-minute shower. A standard (non-water saving) showerhead can use as much as 16 litres per minute
- Collect your shower, bath and basin water and reuse it to flush your toilet, and for the garden and cleaning (bear in mind that greywater use has some health and hygiene risks you must avoid; keep hands and surface areas sanitised/disinfected)
- Defrost food in the fridge or naturally rather than placing it under running water
- Use a cup instead of running taps in the bathroom or kitchen for brushing teeth, shaving, drinking etc.
- Wait for a full load before running washing machines and dishwashers. The rinse water from some washing machines can be reused for the next wash cycle
- Switch to an efficient showerhead which uses no more than 10 litres per minute, as per the City's by-laws
- Upgrade to a multi-flush toilet and/or put a water displacement item in the cistern which can halve your water use per flush

- Fit taps with aerators or restrictors to reduce flow to no more than 6 litres per minute, as per the City's by-laws

How to check for leaks on your property:

1. Close all taps on the property and don't flush the toilets
2. Check and record your meter reading
3. Wait 15 minutes and record the meter reading
4. If there is a difference in your meter reading, you have a leak
5. Call a plumber if it is not a DIY job

One leaking toilet wastes between 2 600 and 13 000 litres per month, depending on the flow rate of the leak. A leaking tap wastes between 400 and 2 600 litres per month.

Residents can contact the City via email to water@capetown.gov.za for queries or to report contraventions of the water restrictions (evidence should be provided to assist the City's enforcement efforts) or they can send an SMS to 31373.

For further information, residents should please visit the water restrictions page on the City's website: www.capetown.gov.za/thinkwater

End

Note to broadcasters: an audio clip is available for download here: <https://soundcloud.com/ct-media/220517-water-updateenglish/s-Nolua>

Issued by: Media Office, City of Cape Town

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