



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

Department of Water and Sanitation celebrates Global Handwashing Day

11 October 2017

The Department of Water and Sanitation will this Friday join the world to celebrate the Global Handwashing Day at Matlosana (Klerksdorp), North West, where Minister Nomvula Mokonyane will visit three institutions to talk about the importance of practising hygiene standards.

Minister Mokonyane will host the main event at Masedi Primary School in Joubertina township where she will talk to 1 200 learners about hygiene and also demonstrate the correct steps of washing hands with soap after using the toilet and before touching food. In the morning she will visit children at Kefentse Kalaote Creche and Joubertina Clinic where she will demonstrate the proper steps of washing hands.

Deputy Minister Pam Tshwete will host a similar event in Mangaung, Bloemfontein on next Tuesday (17 October) where she will educate learners about the importance of hygiene.

According to the British Toilet Association (BTA), several tips can help in minimising the spread of water-borne diseases by:

- Cleaning the seat with flushable antibacterial wipes, or install a seat sanitizer unit in your bathroom
- Install a seat sanitizer unit close to the toilet. This allows users to spray the seat before use and thereby eliminate a large percentage of germs. Many people in other countries carry disinfectant wipes with them for the same purpose
- Flush the toilet with the toilet seat down to minimise “toilet plume”, which hurls bacteria into the air.
- If you don’t have a seat sanitiser or antibacterial wipes handy, Martin said squatting is probably the most suitable way to use the toilet
- Hovering over a toilet while taking a leak is the most hygienic way to use the toilet. This is because bacteria and viruses spread via something called fomites
- If you avoid touching the seat, you therefore avoid transferring microbes from the toilet seat and then on to your skin.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), more than 3,4 million people the world over die every year from water borne diseases while in South Africa cholera and typhoid epidemics have been identified as the silent assassins that creep on children under the age of five. Lack of access to clean water and poverty are the possible major causes for the outbreak of the diseases.

The Department will link Global Handwashing Day with its Sanitation Campaign which will be



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celebrated throughout South Africa until the end of November 2017. Sanitation is one of the basic necessities, which contributes to human dignity and quality of life and is an essential pre-requisite for success in the fight against poverty, hunger, child deaths, gender inequality and empowerment”.

This statement gave rise to the development and approval of the **The National Sanitation Policy Review in 2016**. The policy provides policy positions to address the identified policy gaps and challenges, as well as to address the country’s new national and international development imperatives. The policy also endorses the national sanitation targets, as outlined in the National Development Plan (NDP) and Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF).

“Cobra and Vaal are proud to be working alongside the Department of Water and Sanitation in making a difference in South Africans lives and we are delighted to play our part in Global Handwashing Day. As truly South African manufacturers of taps and basins, we are always looking to build a brighter future for our country and its people. We have developed the hand washing interactive stations and soap giveaways and are looking forward to educating people on better hand sanitation.” said Henk Suelmann, CEO of GDWT.

There is a direct link between hygiene and the practice of regular handwashing, therefore it is incumbent upon every South African to ensure that they wash their hands each time after using toilets and before touching food.

Issued by the Department of Water & Sanitation

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