



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

Theft at the Richards Bay Desalination Plant

19 September 2017

The Department of Water and Sanitation condemns the theft of electric cables at the Richards Bay Desalination Plant that took place in the early hours of Monday morning on 18 September 2017.

The incident was discovered when engineers were doing a routine checks at the sea water intake pumps where it was noticed that cables from the Variable Speed Drives (VSD) electrical panels feeding electrical current to the sea water intake pumps were cut and stolen from the site. Forced entry was made by breaking the locks at both the main gate and the VSD panels to cut and remove the feed cables to the pumps. The incident was reported to the South African Police Service (SAPS).

The theft took place during the time when the Desalination Plant was off at the time of testing sea water; the City of Mhlathuze was supplying water to Richards Bay residents. The Desalination Plant was meant to supply water as of Wednesday, 20 September 2017 however; this incident will cause water interruption. The estimated process to replace the electric cables is enormous.

The Department is particularly concerned that the cable thieves must have known that the plant is currently shut down hence they saw an opportunity to cut the cables.

Vandalism of infrastructure is a criminal offence. Cable theft poses a high risk regarding security of water supply. Offences related to water infrastructure should be reported to the police, local municipality or through the departments toll free number 0800 200 200.

End

Issued by the Department of Water & Sanitation

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