



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

Always take extra care and be safe around canals

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The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) would like to urge members of the public to exercise extra caution around water canals.

Water canals are crucial channels to transport water to ensure that everyone has access to this source of life. Canals are man-made concrete lined channels of water that directs water to various places.

Canals provide access to water, the source of life, but they can also lead to the loss of life and crucial resources if used in an irresponsible manner. As canals play a major role in the movement and accessibility of water, it is crucial that the public also play a serious and critical role in preventing the vandalism of the canals and other water related infrastructure to keep the canals and the nearby communities safe.

Canals are steep and slippery and often it is impossible to gauge the depth and the volume of water contained in a canal. It is therefore crucial that we all work together to prevent the vandalising of the fencing preventing community members and livestock from illegally entering the canals leading to the loss of precious lives. It is important to always keep canals secured to prevent the drowning of people and animals.

Canals present hidden dangers as canal and river water can be very deep and is not treated which means they may contain bacteria that can cause infections. Canals should also not be used for recreational purposes as the probabilities of drowning are high. Parents must always ensure that children do not play near or in canals as the probabilities of drowning are too high for children. Canals are also not meant for ritual practices.

Canals are meant to provide reliable water supply, so it is crucial that we do not use them as dumping sites as the waste leads to serious pollution challenges. Using the canals as dumping sites is also dangerous in that it can lead to flooding as a result of the waste blocking the free flow of water in the canal.



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Canal safety is everybody's business, so let us be responsible citizens and report all vandalism of signage and breaking of fences to the DWS hotline on 0800 200 200. Communities should also take care of fellow community members and caution when they see risky behaviour and also educate each other of the dangers of canals and safety precautions that should be adhered to by all community members at all times.

End

Issued by the Department of Water & Sanitation

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