



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



MEDIA STATEMENT

DWS to ensure that water supply is not affected by load shedding

20 March 2019

The country has been experiencing power cuts in recent weeks and this has caused water users to press panic buttons, suggesting that this will have an adverse impact on water supply.

While the raised concerns are acknowledged, the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) would like to urge water users not to panic with regard to water supply.

Deputy Director-General for Special Projects, Mr. Trevor Balzer, says the department is monitoring the situation and will respond in the same way it dealt with the drought that affected the country since 2014. He says the power outages should be a reason enough for water users to double their water conservation efforts so that there is enough water for everyone.

“In every 24 hour cycle of rotational load shedding we can lose about 4 hours of pumping capacity. This is about 16% of capacity on a station which would normally pump for 24 hours. So if we do indeed lose this type of capacity we would require a similar reduction in consumption as we did during the past drought”, Balzer emphasises.

Balzer said the Department is in consultation with various stakeholders and water entities throughout the country to ensure that their systems do not fail; while adding that at this stage, there is no reported water disruptions attributable to load shedding.

“ESKOM have material interest in keeping our pump stations operational as they rely on our water supply to keep the power stations operational. We will be engaging with ESKOM regarding protocol if we have to shut any station down. Some of our pump stations with variable speed motors need to go through an operational shut down process and should not be subjected to a power failure”, says Balzer.

The Rand Water System, serving approximately 12 million people, is still stable but it will be monitored as some of its capacity has been lost due to high demand caused by high temperatures.

In Limpopo, load shedding has affected bulk water supply operations in Phalaborwa, Marble Hall, Groblersdal and Polokwane. Lepelle Northern Water Board is engaging with ESKOM to maintain power supplies to their installations during load shedding.

Magalies Water reports that load shedding has affected three Water Treatment Plants, thus affecting Bela-Bela, Modimolle-Mookgopong and Moretele Local Municipalities.

Should the situation remain unchanged, a further negative impact will be on Waste Water Treatment Plants, where we can expect to see increased volumes of untreated effluent reaching our rivers and streams.





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