

CITY OF CAPE TOWN

23 OCTOBER 2017

MEDIA RELEASE

WARNING: PHASE 1 OF THE CITY'S CRITICAL WATER SHORTAGES DISASTER PLAN IS IN EFFECT. WATER RATIONING IS UNDER WAY

Drought crisis: guidelines for water rationing

Dam storage levels are at 38,5%, with useable water at 28,5%. The City of Cape Town's engineered rationing intervention is starting to have an effect on consumption but water usage must be reduced further. Consumption is at 585 million litres of collective usage per day. The City activated water rationing as part of the implementation of its Critical Water Shortages Management Disaster Plan. This action intensifies the preceding months of pressure management which continues to be done in an attempt to force water consumption down to required levels. Read more below:

Due to the critical nature of available water supply, all water users across the metro must expect water rationing which could lead to water supply disruptions.

This is likely to result in water supply being disrupted during peak water usage times in the mornings (between 05:00 and 09:00) and in the evenings (between 17:00 and 21:00) if usage is above the required levels. It must be noted that theoretically everyone should have water but that the duration of the outages would depend on the water usage for the area and whether it is within the water restriction levels. The City supplies sufficient water to an area, but if the demand is too high then those in high-lying areas or high-lying properties will experience some outages. The City therefore appeals to those in lower-lying areas to reduce usage to assist in terms of outages in the higher-lying areas.

Service will be restored as soon as demand decreases to within the limitations of Level 5 water restrictions. If an area is using above the daily water limit, rationing through advance pressure management will continue until the limit is reached. It is therefore difficult to pin down an exact time for the duration

of supply interruptions as it depends on the behaviour of the consumers, within a pressure zone.

'Reducing water usage remains the most vital intervention to help see the city through the summer ahead. With the help of almost half of Capetonians, as well as our pressure interventions, leak management programme and the installation of water management devices, we have brought usage down from more than 1,1 billion litres per day to the current volume – but further critical measures, such as pressure reduction, must be intensified to maintain reduced demand throughout summer.

'The City continues to install water management devices on the properties of delinquent water users. Almost 7 000 have been installed to date. In addition, emergency augmentation schemes are progressing. It is foreseen that between 130 and 240 million litres per day will be at some stage of production between December 2017 and May 2018. This includes land- and sea-based desalination, water reclamation, and groundwater abstraction projects, if all goes according to plan.

'It must be noted that reducing consumption is non-negotiable, irrespective of augmentation projects coming online. We ask all water users to support us and to help us to get through this unprecedented drought which is affecting large parts of South Africa as well,' said the City's Mayoral Committee Member for Informal Settlements, Water and Waste Services; and Energy, Councillor Xanthea Limberg.

Facts about rationing

The City is divided into pressure zones. Pressure which controls the rate of flow of water is managed by manually or remotely manipulating pressure valves in the reticulation network. The City has been using pressure reduction to force consumption down and is now applying advance pressure reduction. As per the water restrictions, the City is supply water according to the required level. If more water is used than what is supplied, outages could be experienced.

If an area is using water above the daily limitation, pressure will be reduced to the required level to force consumption down. When consumers reduce consumption, pressure is restored.

Water rationing guidelines

Do:

- Keep between 5 and 10 litres of water available for drinking use only for the household during rationing (average of four persons per household). Please use your discretion
- Keep additional water for pets. Pet owners should use their own discretion

- Reconsider your water usage during peak water usage times. Flatten out the peak by showering (for no more than a minute) later in the evening or before 06:00 in the morning or do your washing after 21:00, as an example. Check for updates on advanced pressure management on CTAlerts (www.twitter.com/cityofctalerts) and the City's website (www.capetown.gov.za/thinkwater). Definitive advance timetables of the outages cannot be provided as water systems must be managed flexibly to avoid damage to critical infrastructure. Rationing does not work like electricity load-shedding. Unlike load-shedding where areas were switched off and on for a two-hour period, pressure management is introduced and remains active in an area all the time. This will provide sufficient water to most households most of the time. In instances of steep slopes or double-storey buildings local to an area, this reduction in pressure is likely to cause constraints. As outages due to increased use are beyond the City's control, it is more difficult to use pressure management than load-shedding to manage demand. The City will, however, provide as much information as possible relating to areas to be rationed approximately 24 hours ahead of time
- When you experience a loss of water supply and before you contact the City's call centre, please check your neighbour's supply first to see whether it is likely a case of rationing. Higher-lying properties will likely experience a higher risk of rationing
- If you reside in or operate from multi-storey buildings, ensure that the water supply system (booster pumps and roof-top storage) is in working order in compliance with the Water By-law (<http://cct.gov.za/xAjse>)
- Ensure that all taps are closed when not in use to prevent damage/flooding when the supply is restored. Ensure that you take the necessary steps, such as speaking to your insurer if possible, to mitigate potential damage and for fire prevention. The City is not liable for any impact on or damage to private infrastructure resulting from the rationing or associated operations, in accordance with the Water By-law (<http://cct.gov.za/xAjse>)
- When supply is restored, the water may appear to be cloudy from the extreme pressure reduction exercise. Please do not waste the initial water. Store it and use it for flushing
- Store essential water in a cool, dark place away from light and dust
- Bottles must remain sealed to prevent contamination
- Clearly label water storage containers as 'drinking water' as opposed to non-drinking water
- Where containers (other than bottles) are to be used for storage, ensure these are cleaned and disinfected
- Keep non-drinking water for flushing, particularly multi-storey buildings as the upper floors may not have water during pressure management cycles
- Use less toilet paper as this requires less water to flush and prevents blockages. Only flush when required and close the lid of the toilet

when flushing toilet bowls where urine has not been flushed. Use appropriate disinfectants and face masks and gloves where required

- Wet wipes and sanitary pads are not to be flushed down toilets as these cause blockages – place these items in the bin
- Do not use your toilet as a dustbin
- Switch to one-ply toilet paper to prevent blockages when you choose to 'let it mellow'
- Ensure that any non-municipal supply water for drinking purposes is acquired from reputable companies who adhere to national safety standards. The City advises against bulk water acquisition unless a company can prove that they have not tapped into the municipal supply. If in doubt, contact the City to investigate
- Use waterless hand-sanitiser where possible
- Ensure that all fire extinguishers are in legal working condition. If possible, acquire fire extinguishers or increase the number of fire extinguishers in homes and buildings
- Note that there may be a build-up of air within the water system when supply is restored
- Note that toilets that use flush-masters will be ineffective due to the low pressures
- Note that high-pressure solar water heaters are not at risk of damage from low water pressure or short periods of no pressure (water outages). In cases of low water pressure, the geyser or storage tank will be refilled at a slower rate and the solar water heater will not be adversely affected. Even in cases of water outages or zero pressure, high-pressure solar water heaters that are installed correctly can withstand short periods of time (a few days at a time) without water with no adverse effect on the pump or the panel.

Don't

- Store excessive municipal water
- Waste a drop of water
- Where non-drinking water is kept for flushing, this should not be stored for longer than a couple of days. Please use your discretion. Please note:
 1. Borehole water: do not use for drinking
 2. Sea water: do not use to flush toilets and do not drink
 3. Spring water: not for drinking purposes
 4. From rivers/wetlands: do not drink. Use only for non-drinking purposes. When collecting non-drinking water, it is best to use gloves and any regulated household disinfectant can be used. If in doubt contact your nearest City Environmental Health Office
 5. Greywater: do not drink. Use only to flush the toilet
- Fall for 'chancers' and thieves who purport to be from the City to install water-efficient gadgets in private homes in an effort to gain access to your premises
- Shower for more than a minute

- Use alternative sources of water for outdoor use at all. Use it only indoors for flushing due to the severity of the crisis

Please note water restrictions and water usage targets may be changed at short notice in an effort to respond to the crisis at hand. This is a resilient municipality with resilient residents and businesses.

Let's save, Cape Town! Together.

An online toolkit has been developed with various resources for all to use to help us to drive this message. Please see our website www.capetown.gov.za to access material that you may require. This toolkit will be updated regularly.

For information on how to meet the daily water usage requirement, residents should please visit the water restrictions page on the City's website: www.capetown.gov.za/thinkwater and utilise our water calculator: <http://bit.ly/ThinkWaterCalculatorCT>

Residents can contact the City via email to water@capetown.gov.za for queries about the water pressure reduction, 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 more information on water management devices, please visit <http://cct.gov.za/mXos4>

End

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