

Infrastructure news, 08 May 2020

Safeguarding of water infrastructure enhances service delivery

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The National Institute for Communicable Diseases confirmed the first COVID-19 case on 05 March 2020. Proactively, the Government of South Africa acted swiftly by declaring COVID-19 a disaster in terms of the Disaster Management Act (57 of 2002).

In a bid to curb the novel COVID-19, over fifteen-thousand water tanks and approximately two-thousand water tankers (trucks) have been delivered to municipalities across South Africa.

This is one of Government's short term initiatives to ensure that communities have sustainable water supply during and beyond the lockdown period. The government further encourages citizens to practice good hygiene and social distancing to flatten the curve of infections by the COVID-19

The Western Cape DWS supported by the Provincial Government of the Western Cape has increased the distribution of water tanks and water tankers across the province.

"To date over 637 water tanks have been delivered with 137 of these installed. While DWS is satisfied with progress achieved thus far, there are concerns with reports of some communities preventing essential services personnel from delivering water services to vulnerable communities," says Ntombizanele Bila-Mupariwa, Director: Planning and Information/ Water Sector Support at the Western Cape office of the Department of Water and Sanitation.

"In areas such as Stellenbosch and Witzenberg, water tanks and taps have been vandalized or stolen. The vandalizing of the emergency water supply infrastructure does not only affect service delivery negatively, but is a waste of the much needed public resources."

This also works against the ideal of ensuring water availability within the need to effect success in reducing infections.

Bila-Mupariwa assert that certain measure must be put in place to curb vandalism of water infrastructure.

This , through employing employing the following measures:

- Communities must be the eyes and ears of government to look after water infrastructure
- Chamber of Business can lend a helping hand by encouraging industries (scrap yards) to not buy stolen water infrastructure.
- Communities are urged to report incidents of vandalism to the local authorities and law enforcement agencies including South African Police Services (SAPS)
- Awareness and education remain key interventions to curb vandalism and theft of water infrastructure.

"We commend those communities who have acted swiftly and in a responsible manner by looking after the water infrastructure," says Bila-Mupariwa.



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