



MEDIA STATEMENT

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2 244 water tanks rolled out in Gauteng as lockdown restrictions are eased

The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) in Gauteng has increased the number of water tanks delivered to water stressed communities to 2 244 as the Government eases the lockdown regulations under alert level 3.

As the regulations are being eased many businesses, especially informal ones are expected to open and start operations and this may increase the need for more water. In addition to supplying water tanks to congested communities, schools are also receiving the water tanks to ensure they meet the health and safety standards required to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

The provision of water tanks by the Department follows a clarion call by President Cyril Ramaphosa for needy communities to be targeted for water supply to stave-off the impact of the virus on vulnerable communities.

Across Gauteng, communities residing in overcrowded environments where it is feared that a significant number of people may be affected, water tanks have been delivered on a continuous basis since the outbreak of the virus. Areas that the Department has aided with the water tanks are in the Cities of Johannesburg, Tshwane and Ekurhuleni, and the District Municipalities of Sedibeng and West Rand.

DWS's Gauteng Provincial Head, Sibusiso Mthembu, said as government was easing lockdown restrictions there would an expectation to cover even more areas that still need the water tanks as businesses start to open.

Mthembu said the informal sector which includes businesses in informal settlements would require water to conduct business and as a result there is a need to push more to distribute the water tanks and to make sure they are operational.

“As more and more people go out of their homes to make a living, there will be more usage of water and this is especially so in overcrowded areas where informal businesses operate. Densely-populated must be focussed on to encourage community members to take hand washing serious to prevent a spike in infections,” said Mthembu.

He added that it was obvious that at some point people would have to go out of their homes to make ends meet and that community members must be encouraged to practice social distancing and washing of hands with soap and water.

Mthembu cited the incident of torching of two water tanks in Orange Farm as something which community members should guard against, urging them to report such incidents to the police.

He said: “There are rogue elements in communities who are have made it their aim to destroy infrastructure that is aimed at making the lives of the people better. Any





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positive step that the government takes, they make sure it takes two steps backwards and so it rests with communities to stop these malicious acts.”

Mthembu also emphasised the protection of water tanks that were received by schools, saying it was vitally important that learners continued to catch up on their studies without any negative interference and worry that someone might damage the property of the school.

Ends

Issued by the Department of Water & Sanitation

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