

# *CANAL SAFETY*

## *CONCEPT DOCUMENT*



WATER IS LIFE - SANITATION IS DIGNITY



**water & sanitation**

Department:  
Water and Sanitation  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**



# CANAL SAFETY



Do not fish in canals.



Do not play near canals.



Do not climb over fences & gates near canals to avoid getting hurt or falling into the canals.



Do not let children go near canals without supervision.



Do not play on bridges or with gates near the canals.



Report children playing near canals.



Do not swim in canals



Do not fetch water from canals for any purpose, you may slip and fall.



Stay away from canal banks . They can be muddy and slippery.



Do not perform ritual practices along the canals.



Do not throw rubbish in canals. Canals are not dumping sites.



Do not drink water from canals. It may make you sick.



Do not vandalise signage posted or remove fencing erected along canals.



## BACKGROUND



Canals are man-made, concrete-lined channels of water that direct water to various places. Canals are steep and slippery, and often it is impossible to gauge the depth and the volume of water contained in a canal.

A majority of the country's open canal systems were designed and constructed many years ago and are located in mostly remote, rural areas. However; today, as communities grow and encroach onto canal servitudes, many of these canals now form part of urban and suburban landscapes. The resulting increase in population density is leading to an increase in incidence access and consequently poses a public safety risk. Drownings of both people and animals are one such risk.

Drowning remains one of the top causes of unnatural childhood deaths in South Africa. For every child that perishes from drowning, five children involved in a near drowning experience are left with permanent brain damage. It only takes four minutes without oxygen for irreversible brain damage to occur. Drowning and near drowning incidents occur across both recreational and non-recreational activities.

Drowning statistics indicate that everyday more than one child drown in South Africa. These drownings usually occur in children under the age of fourteen years. The Medical Research Council consistently lists drowning as one of the highest causes of accidental deaths in children under the age of five.

Drowning is however not limited to children, as water is a convergence point for many religious practices. Many communities also collect water from canals for household and consumption purposes and this also poses risks.

Sadly, canals have become a hotspot for criminal activities, endangering the lives of both communities as well as the employees who are assigned or contracted to work at canals. The theft and vandalism of infrastructure that seeks to promote safety, forms part of these criminal activities.

In addition to adverse impact on human beings, farmers also risk considerable investments as livestock often graze close to canals and sometimes slip into the canals, resulting in the loss of livestock.

***Do not fish in canals***





## CAMPAIGN THEME

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The awareness campaigns aims to promote safety in and around water infrastructure as well as for inland waterways. Under the theme **“Canals and Inland Waterways’ Safety is Everyone’s Responsibility”**, the campaign aims to create awareness with communities who live close to canals and other types of water infrastructure and inland waterways. The campaign will be rolled out across the country, in partnership with various stakeholders.



*Do not play in or near canals*



## LEGISLATION GOVERNING THE WATER SECTOR

### **The Constitution of South Africa**

Section 27 (1) (b) of the Constitution of South Africa clearly articulates that everyone has the right to have access to sufficient food and water.

### **National Water Act (NWA) of 1998. and the Water Services Act of 1997**

The Acts are complementary and provide a framework for sustainable water resource management while enabling improved and broadened service delivery. The NWA is founded on the principle that all water forms part of a unitary, interdependent water cycle, and should thus be governed under consistent rules. It contains comprehensive provisions for the protection, use, development, conservation, management and control of South African water resources.

### **National Water Resource Strategy 2:**

The second edition of the National Water Resource Strategy bases its premise on sustainable, equitable and secure water for a better life and environment for all.

### **National Development Plan**

The plan was launched in 2012 and provides a detailed blueprint on how the country can eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by the year 2030. The national blueprint articulates that all South Africans will have affordable, reliable access to sufficient safe water and hygienic sanitation by 2030.

***Do not climb over canal safety fences***





## CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

- The overall objectives of the canal safety campaign are to strive through a collaborative effort to:
- raise awareness on water safety as it relates to canals and inland waterways;
  - promote the Cooperative Inland Waterways Safety Programme (CIWSP) and the Incident Response Activation Programme (IRAP);
  - foster dialogue on possible solutions towards safer communities;
  - encourage behavioural change and greater collaboration between different stakeholders.

The outcomes of this campaign broadly seek to ensure awareness and education with the public and corporate stakeholders so that we create safety-conscious communities; incident management, rescue support as well as community canal monitoring.



***Do not let children go near canals without supervision***

## CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Specific and long-term solutions of the Cooperative Inland Waterways Safety Programme (CIWSP) seek to ensure:

<b>Objective 1: incident support at waterways canals</b>
<b>CIWSP Solution:</b> Incident Response Activation Programme (IRAP)
<b>Solution description:</b> Cell phone based incident communication system which activates relevant local Response Team members at a specific waterway while keeping national role-players informed in real time
<b>Objective 2: zoning of waterways</b>
<b>CIWSP Solution:</b> Aids to Navigation (AtoN)
<b>Solution description:</b> Marking on all navigable Inland Waterways the activity zones and risk points with specially designed fixed and floating AtoN and Demarcation Markers.
<b>Objective 3: remote monitoring of waterway structures and activities</b>
<b>CIWSP Solution:</b> Cooperative governance Drone Programme
<b>Solution description:</b> Using Drones to help with waterway safety monitoring, enforcement and support.
<b>Objective 4: wash of travelling vessels at waterways</b>
<b>CIWSP Solution:</b> Wash Bays
<b>Solution description:</b> Optimally positioned Vessel Wash Bays at waterways that wash invasive aquatic weeds & seeds off travelling vessels while safety checks are being done to ensure compliance to SAMSA safety regulations.
<b>Objective 5: community empowering programmes</b>
<b>CIWSP Solution:</b> Environmental Monitor Career development
<b>Solution description:</b> To develop a career path for local community members appointed as Environmental Monitors at Wash Bays.
<b>CIWSP Solution:</b> Youth development: Scouts South Africa
<b>Solution description:</b> Incorporating the CIWSP solutions into the Scouts South Africa maritime youth development (Sea Scouts – with a focus on rural youth).

## CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

<b>Objective 6: basic rescue capacity development</b>
<b>CIWSP Solution:</b> Canal Safety
<b>Solution description:</b> Local community canal safety teams with CIWSP designed water safety devices that will prevent drowning in DWS canals.
<b>Objective 7: innovation Incubator</b>
<b>CIWSP Solution:</b> Res-Q Board, Res-Q Noodle, Res-Q 5 litre Bottles, Res-Q Net, Res-Q Cushions
<b>Solution description:</b> A floating device on which a victim in the water can easily and safely be stabilised and lifted out of the water. Private sector sponsorships for the purchase of these equipment will aid communities
<b>CIWSP Solution:</b> Electronic Inland Waterway Navigation
<b>Solution description:</b> Inland waterways electronic navigation tools that will take in consideration drought and flood water levels.
<b>CIWSP Solution:</b> AtoN Vessel
<b>Solution description:</b> Construct a mobile vessel that can be used to deploy SAMSA-DWS approved buoys according to IALA regulations on inland waterways

***The success of employing all of the above solutions is dependent on community and business participation.***



***Do not play on bridges or with gates near the canals.***



## PARTNERS

Community participation form the basis of the collaborative approach that this campaign seeks to implement. Several government partners are however collaborating, especially around South Africa's Inland Waters Strategy (Small Vessel Safety) which incorporates CIWSP and which was approved by the National Cabinet on 24 May 2017. These departmentsd are:

- **National Department of Transport (NDOT)**
- **South African Maritime Safety Authority (SAMSA)**
- **Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA)**
- **Department of Public Service Administration (DPSA) – Centre for Public Service Innovation (CPSI)**
- **South African Police Services (SAPS)**
- **Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) – National Disaster Management**
- **South African Navy**
- **Scouts of South Africa**

***Report children playing near canals.***







## CAMPAIGN MESSAGES

MAIN MESSAGES	SUB MESSAGES
<b>Canals present hidden dangers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canal and river water can be very deep and is not treated and may contain bacteria that can cause infections.</li> <li>• Due to vegetation e.g. plants, cut grass and especially duckweed growing on the canal it can make the surface of the water appear like solid ground.</li> <li>• Canals have hidden and slippery edges which can be dangerous. Plants can hide the edge and even where you can see it, it's easy to slip into the water.</li> <li>• The currents of water can be strong even in canals and can drag one under.</li> </ul>
<b>Canals should not be used for recreational purposes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canals cannot be used for swimming activities due to the current of water and the high possibility of drowning</li> <li>• Canals should not be used for fishing activities</li> <li>• Ritual practices should not be done at canals or close to canals</li> <li>• Children should not play near or in canals even with adult supervision</li> </ul>
<b>Communities should make use of emergency response contact numbers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The public should use emergency numbers when they become aware of risky incidences.</li> <li>• 112 or 10177 are some of the emergency numbers that the public can use.</li> <li>• Members of the public should not attempt to dive out any person or anything that has fallen into a canal as this could place additional lives at risk.</li> </ul>
<b>Canal safety is everyone's responsibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pollution of the canals with rubbish is prohibited.</li> <li>• Communities should report vandalism of signage and breaking of fences to the DWS hotline on 0800 200 200.</li> <li>• Communities should take care of its fellow community members and caution when they see risky behaviour.</li> <li>• Communities should educate each other of the dangers of canals and safety precautions should be adhered to by all community members.</li> </ul>

## APPROACH TO PROFILING THE CAMPAIGN IN THE MEDIA

During the roll out of this campaign, communication will be implemented on various communication platforms including print, broadcast, online and social media. In addition to adverts, media engagements including media briefings and interviews will be held.

The Department will work with partners in local government, private sector as well as community members in elevating the discussions and thematic areas.

## PUBLIC EDUCATION PROGRAMME AT SCHOOLS

This campaign will have a focus on creating awareness with learners, because many casualties and fatalities involve children under the age of five years.

### Format of activations

- Interactive presentations to students about canal safety tips;
- Questions to be asked to gauge the level of awareness about water and canal safety;
- Learners will also be required to suggest solutions to enhance water and canal safety.

### Advantages of activations:

- Raise the profile of water and canal safety with the public;
- Create platforms for the public in order to share concerns and discuss possible interventions;
- Provide the public with information on how to respond to incidences of water and canal risks.



## ONGOING ACTIVITIES

- To encourage the public, partners and stakeholders to have a new orientation around the country's inland waterways and canals;
- To continuously provide campaign messages, educational materials and approaches on the website for downloading;
- To allow communities to register their community activities and events on water safety on the website of the Department;
- Take and share photographs and other media from communities who are actively involved in water safety activities.



***Stay away from canal banks .  
They can be muddy and slippery.***

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