



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



INTERNET ARTICLE

Heavy rains improve the water situation

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This week's sporadic rains in major parts of the country will improve slightly the dam levels that have been on a downward slide in the past months.

Three provinces – Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and North West – have received whirlwind rains that saturated them and in some cases, resulted in flash floods. However, the Department of Water and Sanitation has urged citizens to continue saving water as the country was not out of the woods yet.

For the past five months the country's dam levels have been on the decline at a rate of one percentage week-on-week, with a drop an estimated 12% volumes of water. The situation was exacerbated by the advent of a hot summer which engendered scorching temperatures that impacted negatively on the dam levels. However, as more summer rains drench the country, dam levels are expected to increase steadily until March next year.

According to the latest report on dam levels by the Department of Water and Sanitation, Gauteng's dams have stabilised at 92,5% in the past two weeks. Although the Vaal Dam, on the south of the province, has plunged to 28%, this week's heavy rains are expected to boost the dam's level.

The report added that Free State dams continued to be the fullest in the country at 69,2%, with water reservoirs storing an estimated 10 831,6 cubic metres of water in its reservoirs. The province is home to three of the country's biggest dams such as Gariep, Vanderkloof and Sterkfontein. Garip and Vanderkloof are flowing at 69,2% and 87,4% respectively while Sterkfontein is teetering on it full capacity at 94,4%

The week-long downpours in KwaZulu-Natal are expected to improve significantly the water situation in the drought-prone regions of Umkhanyakude and Zululand. The two regions have experienced severe dry conditions since the beginning of winter which has left most towns desperate for drinking water. However, the Midmar Dam in Natal Midlands and the Driel Barrage have carried the hopes of water availability in the province with their flows of 90,4% and 89,3% apiece.

Northern Cape seems stable at 86,1%, followed by Mpumalanga at 64,2%. Mpumalanga's have been consistent with their levels since the beginning of a dry winter and are expected to be boosted by this week's widespread rainfall.

North West and Limpopo are holding out at 61% and 57,3%. However, Mopani District in Limpopo remains a source of concern with its alarmingly low dam levels. There is virtually no water left in the Middel-Letaba and Tzaneen dams where levels have dropped to 0,7% and 9,7%. Conversely, Klasiere Dam is bursting at the seams at 100,3% while Hans Merensky in Phalaborwa recorded 99,6%

Torrential rains are also expected to boost Eastern Cape dams by a percentage following their drop to below half at the beginning of September. The current level of the province's dams stand at 48,2%.

Western Cape dams have begun losing their levels at a percentage week-on-week as the province nears the end of its winter rainy season.

The Department of Water and Sanitation has appealed to South Africans to continue saving water despite this week's heavy downpours. It would take some time before the low dams returned to their normal levels, the department said.

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