



## water & sanitation

Department:  
Water and Sanitation  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

# INTERNET ARTICLE

## UNDERSTANDING WATER USE LICENCE

19 April 2016

The issuing of water licenses to businesses, and especially the farming sector, is something that many South Africans are still struggling to understand. This is why the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) as the custodian of water resources embarked on an intensive consultative process with all water users that are not registered on the department's WARMS database.

Obtaining legal authorisation as a water user allows one to strengthen the risk profile of his business, as it may become difficult to redevelop the property if the entity is not fully compliant with the National Water Act (NWA). The NWA mandates the DWS to protect, manage and control South Africa's water resources.

The consultative process is one of the measures by the department to ensure that all bulk water users are registered and billed as per the volumes registered on their licences. All bulk water users must pay their debt to enable the department to build and manage its dams.

"The intention is to make sure that all those who use bulk water pay. The department is willing to enter into a payment arrangement with the end users whose debts are high since the debt could be dating back to 2010", said Mr Norman Mudau, Chief Director Revenue Management, Water Trading Entity (WTE) Account.

The aim of water use management is to ensure that any bulk water user taking water from a surface water or groundwater resource, storing water, discharging effluent water, altering banks or impeding and diverting the flow of water in a watercourse, falls under Section 21 of the NWA – depending on the volume of water involved and the aquifer status of the quaternary catchment in which it is situated.

The department will issue invoices three times a year. Domestic and industrial users will receive an invoice monthly while irrigators and forestry industries receive invoices bi-annually or annually.



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The call of government is to make sure that every user has a say in terms of water resources management and assists the department as part of a team, whilst being compliant with the National Water Act (NWA 36 of 1998). As a way forward, water users will be required to acknowledge their debts.

**Mbali Mahaye**