



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

OPINION PIECE

There is still too much irresponsible water use from households

07 October 2016, Mahikeng Mail

According to the National Water Act of 1998, Item 6(1) of schedule 3 allows the Water and Sanitation Minister to limit the use of water if he/she believes that, on reasonable grounds, a water shortage exists within a certain area.

The constant watering of gardens, car washes and filling up of swimming pools especially in the summer season should stop because the higher the consumption the closer we are to water restrictions. Currently provinces such as Gauteng have imposed water restrictions and this is just a wakeup call to other provinces that are in actual fact in more serious drought.

In South Africa, most affected communities and households either receive free basic water or they can afford paying for water, but despite different backgrounds, they still misuse water.

The Department of Water and Sanitation constantly creates awareness about saving water. Irresponsible water use can only be brought to an end by behavioural change. This is what Minister Mokonyane is always preaching, "More than ever, we need a behavioural change to wise water use," she says.

Of course pre-paid water meters can limit water consumption but also monitoring water meters is important to ensure you don't end up with a high water bill. They say charity begins at home and that is why water wise awareness among children and those at home is important, that way even the recreational water toys which require a constant stream of water will not be preferred by children if they know they are wasting water.

Water is worth every cent because it is expensive, so please let's not waste it. Monitoring our water consumption in the kitchen, toilet, bathroom and garden will lead to less water bills. The use of grey water to flush the toilet and water the garden can limit the number of times you use fresh water to flush your toilet.

Unmetered yard stand pipes are now abused by the public and this does not contribute to wise water use. Instead of using the water for consumption, the water is now being used for gardening or car washes, all the signs of wasting water. Water conservation is meant to prevent water wastage and loss.

At home, avoid flushing the toilet unnecessarily. Dispose of tissues, insects and other such waste in the trash rather than the toilet. The Drop-the-Block campaign promotes water use efficiency and entails placing a plastic block into a toilet cistern, and saves water by displacing up to 2 litres of water per flush. One important point sometimes ignored, is that all tenants in the flats and rental cottages should report all significant water losses (broken pipes, open hydrants, errant sprinklers, abandoned free-flowing wells, etc.) to the property owner or learn basic plumbing tips.

Katlego Mokaila is the Communications Manager in the Department of Water and Sanitation, North West Province