



## water & sanitation

Department:  
Water and Sanitation  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

### INTERNET ARTICLE

#### **Water Use Licenses a must for sand mining in KwaZulu-Natal and other areas**

10 February 2016

The Department of Water & Sanitation (DWS) is battling the issue of unlawful water use through illegal and legal sand mining activities in KwaZulu-Natal and some parts of the country.

DWS is exerting its energy in educating people to apply for water use licences that will grant them permission to do their trade without fears of facing raids and being prosecuted for performing illegal activities.

The drive by DWS comes amid a deluge of new sand mining operations which appear every so often that it is even becoming difficult to follow through with the actions to halt this illegal activity due to the ever so increasing number.

The most affected rivers in KwaZulu-Natal are Mvoti, Tongathi, Mdloti, Mgeni, Illovo, Mzambe and Mthwalume Rivers, not to say the other rivers are clearly free of this illegal activity.

In the past DWS has done numerous operations and raids to try and stop them, sometimes jointly with the Department of Mineral Resources (DMR). From the raid operation of November 2014 in Mvoti and Illovo Rivers, some of the operators have stopped and left the sites without rehabilitating. Some still continue after being issued with legal notices.

The department is also seeking legal assistance and is in process of getting a court interdict against all those who still continue.

It is hoped that this process will be facilitated by the High Court for the illegal miners to stop, and secondly to rehabilitate the area.

The DWS together with DMR is also in the process to try and engage Tribal Leadership to assist and stop this illegal activity.

The unlawful water use through sand mining has also contributed to the drought and water shortage problems in the province. Some of these sand miners block the water flow, and in some areas this affects dam the water. The results are that water from the dams cannot reach the abstraction point of the drinking water supply.

It is very important that the owners of such activities apply to the Department for Water Use Licenses to assess the status of the river and potential impacts before such licenses are granted.