



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
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INTERNET ARTICLE

The implication of load shedding on water supply

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The recent load shedding by Eskom has brought up another dimension to the routine operations of the department of water and sanitation as well as local municipalities.

Recently electrical interruptions due to load shedding resulted in water shortages and low pressure at the Nelson Mandela bay metropolitan municipality .This is because power cuts were experienced in areas that feed the water reservoirs .The machines that are used to pump water were not functional and this resulted in low pressure.

Load shedding also reportedly resulted in low pressure problems at the lower Umfolozi War Memorial Regional hospital .The capacity of the water tank had reached alarming levels and the hospital began reducing water consumption in non-clinical areas .This helped in increasing the pressure in critical clinical areas .The hospital redirected water flow and this allowed the water tank to fill up. Surgeries and theatre staff therefore continued as normal although other sections of the hospital were negatively affected.

Engineers from the City of uMhlatuze indicated that load shedding had caused the pump to work slower thereby decreasing the pressure .This shortage of water meant that the hospital had to send a message to all staff to use water sparingly and avoid water wastage .Therefore,due to some clever and quick thinking a solution to the water scenario became possible.

The potential health danger of having no water is dehydration ,especially amongst children and senior citizens .This can be exacerbated if water and power cut offs can happen at the same time .The risks of running out of water due to load shedding needs to be understood within the context of each operation .Contingency plans as well as other measures ,such as a generator, need to be made .For instance ,the hospital can solve the water issue relatively easily by installing their own gravity-fed tanks that act as an emergency store replenished by the municipal water supply .Households as well as businesses need to tackle this new problem heads on and come up with innovations that are applicable to their particular circumstance.

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