



INTERNET ARTICLE

23 March 2015

Water restrictions: what are they and what do they really mean?

Water restriction is a limitation put on the use or enjoyment of water by members of the public. It is a limiting condition or measure, usually from the municipality, that lays the condition on how much water can be used, when and in which area. In their most severe form certain activities can be curtailed altogether.

Water restrictions are usually as a result of falling dam levels, especially during times of drought. They help with water conservation and stem the reduction in water supplies. These are stern measures needed when members of the public ignore warnings from the government by means of radio messages to conserve water, or ignore posters and leaflets offering water saving tips and adverts on television.

There are different kinds of restrictions depending upon the location. Restriction on watering of lawns means that neighbours can call the police when anyone is seen doing this. There can be a ban on sprinkler systems which means that although you can water the lawn, sprinklers are not allowed. The municipality can even go as far as putting a restriction on washing vehicles, hosing pavements or refilling a swimming pool.

Water restrictions can also be timely. For example, there can be a restriction on watering lawns but exceptions can be made like for them to be allowed once a week, on a Sunday for example. There can also be water restrictions between 10:00 in the morning and 6:00 at night.

Some municipalities choose to divide restrictions into stages. For example, stages 1, 2 or 3. In this instance the municipality must communicate the different stages of water restrictions it has imposed.

Water restrictions are effective in that they force members of the community to be aware that water is a scarce commodity and that everyone should contribute to saving water. During water restrictions the municipality is able to notice a distinct and immediate result of its interventions. Water restrictions also make members of the community to be innovative in saving water and as such to come up with new methods of water use, such as water harvesting, the use of boreholes, etc.

However, water restriction is an emotive subject because it is made up of stringent measures. Fines of up to R3000 can be imposed on residents. Also, extreme measures such as restaurants not being allowed to provide patrons



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

with water unless they ask for a glass or hotels being required to put up placards in customers' rooms giving them the option to forgo having their towels and linen cleaned more regularly. All affected residents need to know about the latest restrictions as applicable. Strict rules are enforced by metropolitan police through random checks.

Thabang Molai

Issued by the Department of Water & Sanitation

For more information contact Sputnik Ratau, Director Media Liaison, DWS, at 082 874 2942

For media releases, speeches and news visit the Water & Sanitation portal at:
www.dwa.gov.za