

Stringent water restrictions and tariffs in PE Metro and Kouga

Kouga Municipality has announced that there will also be heightened water restrictions in the Kouga area, following on from the announcement of increased water restrictions in the Nelson Mandela Bay area.

And like in the Metro area, those who squander water or use more than their daily allocations will face whopping penalty bills at

the end of the month. Increased water tariffs and penalty payments for those who use too much, is being enforced by Kouga Municipal accounts since the end of 2016. And many in Kouga are squandering water.

Like in the Metro local residents have been told to use less than 50 litres of water per day, if not, they face the higher tariffs.

Previously Kouga residents paid R10.11 per kilolitre for usage under 12 kls. Since the introduction of the emergency tariffs, Kouga residents now pay R13.26 per kl for the same usage. If they use more than 12 kl they pay 33.45 per kl.

For eg a household that was using 35kl of water per month and paying R354 in 2016, had to, since last year, pay R576 for the same amount of water. And the household spends more than the daily quota the household has had to pay a punitive tariff of R847. Since 1 July 2018 consumers have to pay higher water tariffs - announced in the recent KMG budget increases.

The combined levels of the supply dams dropped to less than 18,88% last month. "As Kouga makes use of the same supply dams as the Metro, we also will be enforcing stricter water controls as they have done," Kouga Infrastructure and Engineering portfolio councillor, Freddy Campher, says.

"We also anticipate that the daily target usage per person will soon be decreased even further. From the current 50 litres per person per day to 40 litres per person per day. Late July Alfred Trollip, mayor of the MMB Metro, said while the recent rains bring some relief, it by no means reduces the severity of the drought, crisis facing the Metro and neighboring municipalities of the Sarah Baartman district municipality, such as Kouga.

The main significance of the recent rain in the neighboring municipalities is that it reduces the urgent irrigation needs of the very important and strategic citrus and deciduous fruit industries that provide an economic lifeline to so many in this region, Trollip maintained.

Heightened water restrictions were introduced late July in the Metro area and these are likely to be enforced in the Kouga municipal area as well. These stringent measures include:

- Restrict household consumption.
- No use of hoses allowed (to water gardens, wash cars, hose down walks or paving), top up pools, fountains or ponds, etc), unless:
 - The water is used for fire fighting purposes.
 - No use of municipal water supply allowed to water gardens, wash cars, hose down walks or paving, top up pools, fountains or ponds, etc.
- No use of sprinklers or irrigation systems allowed.
- No applications to build swimming pools will be approved.
- No use of automatic urinal flushing systems allowed.
- All car washes will be closed if they have not achieved the requirement to recycle 60% of their water.
- No municipal showers will operate.

Campher says the biggest concern at the moment is Hankey and Patensie, which relies mainly on the Kouga Dam for water. "We would like to plead with residents to cut back their water usage drastically as an extreme drought is expected."

He said the municipality might be considered rationing water to the towns so as to ensure the remaining water lasts for as long as is possible. The municipality has installed 90 rainwater tanks at strategic places, including municipal buildings, at the towns.

"We have also been searching for underground water in Glegolom, Isoholies has been drilled at the Kouga Dam and near Zuurbrun. The Gamtoos Valley towns of Hankey and Patensie face severe water shortages if good rain doesn't fall in the catchment area of the Kouga Dam within the next few weeks."

The level of the Kouga Dam, which is the main water source to both towns, dropped to an alarming 7.75% on 18 July. Residents, businesses and visitors have been asked to use water only when absolutely necessary.

According to the latest figures supplied by the Gamtoos Irrigation Board, Patensie used up its entire quota for July during the first two weeks of the month.

A total of 23 262 kl of water was used from 1 to 14 July. The monthly target is 23 044 kl.

In Hankey the situation is even more dire. The total usage for the first two weeks of July was 32 833 kl. This is already far more than the target of 26 000 kl for the whole month.

"It is not unusual for there to be a steep spike in water usage during July," Hendricks said.

"Every year the water supply to the towns are switched off for two to three weeks in June to allow the Gamtoos Irrigation Board to perform maintenance on the canal system. Once the water supply is restored, people tend to go overboard and use far more water than usual."

He said the municipality might have to consider rationing water to the towns so as to ensure the remaining water lasts for as long as is possible. The municipality, since the beginning of the year, installed 90 rainwater tanks at strategic places, including municipal buildings, at the towns.

Many St Francis Bay residents are furious as the town is still on so much underground water that used to be available and was used by the town's residents and those in Cape St Francis before it was decided by the previous Kouga Council to use water from PE instead. The current municipal government has decided to continue using PE water for St Francis instead of repairing the pipes and pumps so the town can use the underground water - at least for swimming pools and washing cars and watering gardens. St Francis Chronicle has received many complaints from consumers in this regard.

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631 Kruisfontein residents receive title deeds



A crowd of people from the Kruisfontein community in Humansdorp come to receive title deeds for their houses on Mandela Day from Kouga's Mayor, Horallo Hendricks.

More than 600 residents received the title deeds to their RDP houses at a Nelson Mandela Day event held by Kouga Municipality in celebration of late President Nelson Mandela's 100th Birthday.

The residents, from the Humansdorp suburbs of Youth Camp, Vaaldam, Gill Marcus and old Arcadia, have been waiting for more than a decade for title deeds to their houses. Some people are older than 70 and have never had proof they own their homes.

One of the oldest recipients, 78-year-old Willie Hendricks, said it was a proud day for him and he was glad the house could be left to his daughter for looking after him for many years after he lost a leg.

Mayor Hendricks said the right to own land speaks to the restoration of human dignity, which lay very close to Nelson Mandela's heart.

He said another 1057 title deeds will be handed out at Sea Vista, Kwa-Nomzamo, Patensie, Hankey, Jeffreys Bay and Thornhill from August to October.

Also on Mandela Day, Kouga Municipality fixed up the house of Kwa-Nomzamo's oldest resident, Ruyi Nkomo, 108 years.

The municipality further partnered with the Foundations Mail to collect used or spare baby clothing, to be distributed to organisations that work with orphaned and vulnerable babies.