



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

15 December 2022

MEDIA RELEASE – POST-FLOODING RECOVERY & PREPAREDNESS FOR ANTICIPATED INCLEMENT WEATHER AND RAINFALL EVENT

Introduction:

In relation to the known adverse weather events that occurred on the 12th and 13th of December 2022 within our Valley, the municipality acknowledges the service interruptions and inconvenience caused in this regard. This statement will reflect on the collaborative efforts taken to date to re-establish minimum service standards across various critically affected service categories. In addition, the actions taken will inform the readiness for the ensuing storm, as communicated via the latest weather advisory published on our social media platforms.

Informal Settlements:

The municipal Housing and Human Settlements department was deployed to assess damages inflicted within informal settlements as a result of the recent floods. The most severely impacted areas were flagged (i.e. De Doorns East), and a thorough inspection conducted.

In GG Camp (Sandhills) the team observed that 14 structures were flooded, but fortunately without structural damages. At Hasie Square, two (2) structures situated in the ravine were completely swept away due to the heavy rainfalls. Despite damaged roads in Stofland, which restricted access to the area, it was found that at least nineteen (19) structures collapsed. Mpumelelo and Lubisi were the worst affected settlements as approximately one hundred ten (110) structures were completely washed away. All these structures were located on adjacent riverbanks and within the flood line.

No formal requests were received from the public or affected households to be relocated or that alternative accommodation be availed, although assistance was requested to replace certain household contents. The limited damage caused to the municipal rental stock will be addressed through normal maintenance activities. We acknowledge the swift assistance from humanitarian institutions and stakeholders in organising and distributing essential humanitarian supplies.

Unfortunately, the municipality regrets to report that it is aware of the rebuilding of structures within the exact vicinity that was heavily impacted by the flash floods. In addition to the numerous advisories (e.g. notice boards, warnings and notices) issued to alert the community of the dangers associated with erecting structures in close proximity to riverbanks and within flood lines, the municipality again urges citizens residing within these areas, to refrain from such practices as it poses significant risks of damage/loss of assets and lives as well as the destruction of livelihoods. The municipality calls on all community leaders to join hands and proactively prevent such actions to preserve life and livelihoods.



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Roads & Stormwater Services:

The flash floods inflicted significant damage to road- as well as underground storm water infrastructure. However, all available resources have been mobilised to conduct damage assessments and prioritise mop-up operations (i.e. removing all siltation and debris) throughout all affected areas. Excavators and tipper trucks have been sourced to aid in clean-up operations, but also to clear and prepare storm water channels for the ensuing storm anticipated to make landfall tomorrow (Friday 16 December 2022).

In addition, a service provider has been appointed to conduct repair works on damaged road infrastructure. The works are anticipated to commence within the next week, which is beneficial particularly in the context of the ensuing storm and further possible damages that may be inflicted on the infrastructure. The department will continuously monitor and assess infrastructural damages to ensure that the minimum service standard is reinstated swiftly.

Electrical Services:

A temporary electrical connection has been established at the site of the faulty cable (intersection of Russell and Adderley Street), hence, electrical supply from Russel- to Durban Street has been restored. The team remains on site to repair and re-establish the permanent connection. In addition, the team continues to respond to all individual/household electrical service disruptions, on an as-and-when received basis and in accordance with available resources. All known area faults have been attended to and resolved.

Water Services:

Touwsrivier Water Supply

The Bokrivier Water Treatment Works is operational and supplying water to Touwsrivier. The pipeline is intact; however, it has been compromised at three points where the line intersects water ways due to the pressure applied by the flooding water. A team is currently on site and in process of securing the line before the ensuing storm makes landfall tomorrow (Friday 16 December 2022). Although teams are working around the clock to fast-track this repair, the community should note that progress is delayed due to the gravel road to Bokrivier and the inspection road to the pipeline that were washed away.

The current storage capacity of the reservoirs are as follows:

- Steenvliet Reservoir Level: 52%
- Topkamp Reservoir Level: 95%

De Doorns Water Supply (Level 2 water restrictions still applicable)

The water availability level in the reservoir supplying De Doorns town, is currently at 30%. Teams are on site and in process of replenishing water availability levels within the reservoirs. This is imperative to restore water supply to its full capacity, specifically to high-lying areas of the town. The low water levels within the reservoir further contribute to low pressure and/or emptiness within supply lines.



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As a result, reservoirs may take longer to fill as supply lines are filled first. To date, water supply has been restored up to the old age home.

Progress of fully reinstating water supply has also been hampered as certain access roads to reservoirs have been completely washed away. As a result, teams are unable to promptly inspect reservoirs and water levels. Notwithstanding this challenge, simultaneous efforts are being made to repair the access roads to enhance ease of access to the reservoirs.

At Stofland, all pumps and treatment works are operational, however, during higher stages of load-shedding, supply to the area becomes compromised, specifically if water availability levels within the reservoir drops below 70%. As a result, high-lying areas within the locality are affected. The access road to Stofland Reservoir also washed away and, as a result, must be reached by foot.

The current storage capacity of the reservoirs are as follows:

- Stofland Reservoir Level: 45%
- De Doorns Town Reservoir Level: 30%

General

Note that the excessive flooding naturally contributes to the discoloration of water. However, numerous water samples have been taken throughout De Doorns and confirmed to be safe for human consumption. Frequent purification, monitoring and testing initiatives have been put in place to remain abreast of potential changes in water quality. Notwithstanding the above, the municipality maintains its 7-day “boil-water” advisory published yesterday, merely as a precautionary measure. The municipality will immediately inform the public should the quality of the water deteriorate. As a result of the current circumstances, a water tanker has been dispatched to De Doorns to supply water to hotspot areas (i.e. high-lying areas in town and Stofland) in accordance with a pre-determined schedule. Should an urgent need for water supply arise in other areas of the town, citizens are requested to contact the Service Support Centre (0860 12 12 12), upon which the truck will be dispatched to assist subject to its availability.

The remainder of the towns and areas remain fully operational without any serious matters to report.

Sanitation Services:

No damage (apart from minor flooding/storm water ingress into the network) has been reported at waste water treatment works. As a result, all facilities remain operational. Communities should however note that the operational effectiveness of waste water pump stations are compromised by higher stages of load-shedding, due to the loss of electrical supply at the pump stations. This subsequently results in a “push-back” of sewage into the network and is the primary cause of increased sewage spills and blockages during high stages of load-shedding.



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Conclusion:

The municipality regrets the service delivery interruptions and inconvenience caused as a result of the recent inclement weather event. However, the collaborative efforts of members of society, civil- and private organisations as well as government departments during this challenging period is applauded. Stakeholders that would want to offer their assistance and/or contribute humanitarian supplies during recovery actions, may contact the **Service Support Centre** at 0860 12 12 12.

With reference to the inclement weather advisory issued for the coming weekend, communities should note that all essential service teams have been placed on high alert and are ready to serve and respond to any adverse flooding and/or related event that may occur as a result of the ensuing storm.

Kindly note the following important service numbers:

- Reporting service issues/interruptions and general matters:
Service Support Centre (0860 12 12 12)
- Emergency calls during high emergency/life-threatening situations:
Emergency Control Centre (023 342 2430 or 112)

Members of the public are referred to the following useful tips during severe storms:

- Move to higher ground if in close proximity to a flooded area
- Avoid crossing flooded roads and pathways
- Ensure that mobile/electronic devices are sufficiently charged
- Save the emergency numbers on mobile devices
- Keep personal documents, credit cards, ID, passport etc. in a waterproof bag
- Pack dry clothing to keep warm
- Have an emergency whistle to signal help
- Pack non-perishable foods, candles, water and matches
- Have a torch and batteries available
- Visit the link for more useful tips: <https://hsseworld.com/photo-of-the-day-flood-safety-tips/>

We encourage all members of society to remain vigilant and safe during the anticipated storm. We further implore for patience toward our teams serving during this period and encourage the collaboration of those able to do so. Lastly, we convey our heartfelt gratitude to all members of staff assuming the call of duty.

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Media Queries

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