



MEDIA RELEASE

20 June 2023

ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS THROUGHOUT BVM

Situation report: 20 June 2023

General

Over the past week, drenching rain and damaging wind hit the Breede Valley Municipality (BVM) in full force, resulting in incidents of severe localised flooding. Consequently, many households and residents, particularly in the Rawsonville area, have been severely impacted. Councillors and officials at BVM are acutely aware of the challenges and are continuing to do all within our power and resources to provide relief-measures to those in need. Although the adverse weather has temporarily subsided, another cold front is forecasted for the forthcoming weekend and next week. BVM will continue to issue weather advisories and warnings upon receipt and the public should please take note of- and consider these warnings as serious. We should brace ourselves for a cold and wet winter.

During occurrences of severe weather conditions, **municipal services** may be adversely impacted. This is particularly due to aggravated working conditions coupled with increased pressure on our resource availability during such incidents. However, municipal teams remain on high alert and will prioritise the swift repair of all service interruptions emanating from such adverse weather incidents. On this premise, we implore the public's patience whilst our teams respond to service complaints during such incidents and related circumstances.

To streamline and coordinate BVM's disaster response linked to the Rawsonville flooding incident, a local JOC (Joint Operational Committee) was established on Wednesday 14 June 2023. The committee comprised of the Executive Mayor, Deputy Executive Mayor, MMC for Human Settlements and Housing, the Executive Management Team, and members of operational departments.

Rawsonville

Rawsonville has been severely affected by the flooding. More than 360 households (1000+ individuals) have been displaced. Many of these persons are currently staying at family or friends, but BVM secured the Church Hall in De Nova where at least 300 people have been staying for the past few days. Unfortunately, the hall could only be secured until Wednesday, 21 June 2023. BVM is considering alternative support that may be required after this period, the first intention being the successful relocation of households/displaced residents to their respective structures, subject to the area being declared safe for relocation.

BVM's responsibility regarding incidents such as these are primarily to action emergency response and coordinate community relief initiatives. As initial response, the municipality secured and distributed mattresses and blankets and provided other humanitarian relief (funded from internal funds) whilst community donations were still absent. The municipality, in collaboration with volunteer support, coordinated efforts once community donations started trickling in. To date, BVM in conjunction with several organisations and community volunteers, have distributed more than 200

matrasses and blankets, several hygiene packs, kiddies' warm hoodies and two warm meals per day to people staying in the church hall. More donations are coming in and are being distributed. We convey our heartfelt gratitude to all that have donated/contributed to this cause. We want to thank the volunteers and service providers who have gone beyond measure to serve during this time of disaster. Let us continue to unite and support those in need.

Apart from the humanitarian relief efforts, our Roads & Stormwater team conducted flooding mitigation/protection works on the riverbank over the past weekend, to prevent and limit immediate and future flooding within the area. Unfortunately, the persistent rain and excessive water levels eradicated all the progress made. In terms of the condition of the ground and soil, it is currently not safe for heavy machinery to access and work in the area. Our teams are monitoring this and will reconvene works as soon as it has been declared safe to continue. It is important to note that any works within a watercourse may only be done subject to prior approval from the Department of Environmental Affairs. Works could therefore only commence after such approval was obtained from the applicable department.

In addition, the high water table in the area, obliged the municipality to temporarily prohibit all funerals in the Rawsonville cemetery. The public is advised to utilise the Worcester cemetery until it is declared safe to reconvene with burials in Rawsonville.

Other areas

BVM takes cognisance of flooding that occurred in several farming communities and rural area/towns within its jurisdiction. Fortunately, the impact is not as severe as in Rawsonville. Notwithstanding, BVM is closely monitoring the impact of the adverse weather and flooding in other areas and remains on high alert to initiate immediate emergency response where required. It should further be noted that the Provincial Government (particularly Departments of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning as well as Agriculture) is considering the impact imposed on the agricultural sector and investigating probable support that could be disbursed to the affected areas throughout the province.

Roads

Municipal authorities (Cape Winelands District Municipality – CWDM & BVM) are working around the clock to repair damaged road infrastructure as working conditions and available resources permit. A detailed status update of key roads in - and around BVM are provided below. It is imperative to note that these roads fall under the jurisdiction of the Provincial Government and CWDM, respectively. The BVM Roads & Stormwater team stands ready to assist the CWDM where needed.

- Closed/Partially Closed:
 - N1 - Du Toitskloof pass - repairs/clean-up actioned by Provincial Government
 - De Doorns – Modderdrift - repairs/clean-up actioned by CWDM
 - De Doorns – Buffelskraal - repairs/clean-up actioned by CWDM
 - De Doorns – Malherbe - repairs/clean-up actioned by CWDM
 - Rawsonville – Slanghoek - repairs/clean-up actioned by CWDM
 - Rawsonville – Louwshoek - repairs/clean-up actioned by CWDM
 - Rawsonville – Brandvlei-road - repairs/clean-up actioned by CWDM

- Open:
 - The Huguenot tunnel has been reopened for all traffic.

Conclusion:

BVM calls for public support and patience during this period. Our teams, in collaboration with government partners, stakeholders and volunteers remain committed to restoring the level of service within all affected areas. Please continue to exercise extreme precaution during adverse weather conditions to minimize and avoid damage to infrastructure and loss of life. Our heartfelt gratitude is again issued to all that have extended a helping hand during this period. Let us continue to stand and operate in solidarity with those affected.

To remain updated on this matter, please visit/follow the BVM Facebook page and/or BVM Digital (Our citizen engagement application).

Please be reminded of the following important emergency contact details:

- Service Support Centre (only to report service interruptions): 0860 12 12 12
- Emergency Contact Numbers:
 - 023 342 2430
 - 107 (From a landline) or 112 (From a cellphone)

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Media Queries

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