

Water and Sanitation in the News

Water leaks to cost Durban dear

Years of neglect of the city's ailing and crippled water infrastructure have left the eThekweni Municipality with no option but to take drastic steps and pay big money. More than 15000 households contribute nothing to the city coffers for the water they use. This was the frank observation by eThekweni water and sanitation head Ednick Msweli in a detailed report tabled before the city's executive committee. To address the water loss nightmare, the city would have to pay R300 million a year for the next five years.

In the report, Msweli said 35% of water leakage was due to faulty taps, overflows at storages and "leakages on service connections up to point of customer metering". He said the R300m would be used to replace ageing pipes. The auditor-general's report released in January revealed how the city was losing 237 million litres of water a day because of leaks. It stated the losses amounted to R602.6 million a year.

The municipality's executive committee expressed concern last week about the growing water loss challenge and requested a presentation from the water and sanitation unit. Msweli said the primary reason for the municipality's precarious situation was that infrastructure had not been replaced on time. Illegal connections spiralled with communities not taking advantage of water amnesty programmes. Other contributing factors were: Unmetered connections; Connections not in Coins (billing system) or not monitored; Inadequate capacity (human and financial resources); and Vandalism of infrastructure. Msweli's report also noted "community behaviour" in some areas, citing KwaMashu's L Section, where city workers were "unable to work".

According to the report, the city's billing system was fraught with irregularities. For example, 40 187 water accounts were active but were billed "zero consumption"... "Our infrastructure is failing. We are recording 285 faults (bursts)

a day... Unless you replace or rehabilitate - the 285 will become 385 and so on. This is just on the water network; on the connection side, it's another 280 leaks a day," he said...

Source: [IOL News, 11 March 2015](#)

The situation in eThekweni confirms some of the most important reasons for preventative maintenance:

Plant Safety and Efficiency: In order to avoid injuries to equipment operators, regularly scheduled preventative maintenance can ensure the machines are working properly. Preventative maintenance assures the efficiency and speed of equipment. The energy and life of equipment is also conserved.

Immediate and Long-Term Cost Savings: Money can be saved when conducting preventative vs. emergency maintenance. For instance, preventative maintenance costs less to facilitate than a large repair or replacement. During an emergency shutdown situation, the immediacy required can cause both parts and labour to be priced at a premium, if they are available at all. Preventative maintenance also allows equipment to run at higher capacities for longer, allowing more production.

Time Savings: Preventative maintenance usually take less time to complete than emergency repairs and replacements. Planned equipment outages during maintenance, avoids an outage when the machine is needed most.

Source: [process barron](#)

The **Municipal Assistant™** assists with operations, maintenance (preventive and reactive) and management of water and wastewater facilities and related infrastructure. The system helps ensure that assets and people perform at optimal levels, which reduce service disruptions due to asset failure or human error, thereby reducing future maintenance costs.

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