

## Water and Sanitation in the News

### Water trucks take over as communities run dry

*Amid ongoing power cuts, many communities are dealing with intermittent water supplies and relying on water trucks for portable water as municipalities struggle to maintain their water systems.*

A Health-e News investigation found that communities in at least three municipalities in Gauteng, the North West and Limpopo rely on truck deliveries of water to survive. Worst affected are informal settlements and rural villages, some of whom have been dependent on erratic supply from trucks for years.

In other areas in the Free State and Eastern Cape, where trucks are not available, residents are literally left begging for water. Last year, over a quarter of households had water disruptions lasting longer than two days, according to StatsSA. That figure is likely to be worse this year, with even Johannesburg residents going without water recently.

Yet water expert Dr Marius Claassen, head of water resources research at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research says there isn't a national water shortage yet, except in some KwaZulu-Natal areas. "We have enough water in the country to meet the current and medium-term water needs. The challenge lies in the infrastructure required to treat the water and move it from the bulk supplies to end users"...

Source: [health-e, 15 Dec. 2014](#)

### Context

Many South African municipalities are currently struggling to supply enough and clean drinking water to communities – especially in rural areas – mainly due to old and failing infrastructure and water sources being contaminated by sewerage and other pollutants.

According to recent reports by the World Health Organization (WHO), 748 million people globally do not have ready access to an improved source of drinking-water. Meanwhile hundreds of millions of people live without clean water and soap to wash their hands, facilitating the spread of diarrhoeal disease, the second leading cause of

death among children under 5. In another report, *From Joint Thinking to Joint Action: A Call to Action on Improving Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for Maternal and Newborn Health*, jointly released during the week by WHO and other global institutions, calls are made for greater emphasis on water and sanitation in the next set of development goals. The report, argues for better coordination between those promoting water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) programmes and the maternal health sector. The study particularly finds that the lives of new mothers and babies are being put at risk by an unreliable supply of safe water.

Source: [The Guardian, 16 Dec. 2014](#)

Having up to date and accurate information about communities' water and sanitation situations, are daily becoming more critical in preventing crises and ensuring sustainable health and development of communities around the world.

In addition to supplying water infrastructure operational management systems and engineering services, [WAMTechnology](#) is an experienced provider of **community vulnerability assessments**. WAMTech has conducted recent projects for local and global clients whereby numerous communities across six African countries were assessed for vulnerabilities related to the supply of drinking water and public health risks related to sanitation.

Risk assessments are conducted in terms of a range of identified hazards including the impact on components of the infrastructure critical for water supply and public health and safety. Among others, hazards associated with relevant water infrastructure age, capacity and condition; as well as operations and maintenance; floods or droughts; theft and vandalism; and socio-economic factors are assessed in order to determine a rating on a cumulative events matrix – indicating the likelihood and severity of a community's vulnerability to experience events ranging from 'insignificant/minor' to 'major/catastrophic' in terms of water supply and public health.

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WAMTech are specialists in implementing technology systems for improved governance, focussing on Water and Public Health Information Systems

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