

## Water and Sanitation in the News

### **Umbilo River contamination spreading**

The eThekweni Municipality is appealing to members of the community to be vigilant and avoid any form of contact with water from the Umbilo River, until further notice. This comes after contaminated water seeped into the Umbilo River through stormwater drains after a chemical warehouse caught fire two weeks ago.

The municipality says the stormwater drains have been sealed-off to prevent any more leakage. However, the already contaminated water in the river continues to move downstream towards the Durban harbour. Communities around the Westmead, Queensburgh, Northdene, Edwin Swales Road, Paradise Valley and other areas in close proximity to the Umbilo River are urged to be extra cautious and avoid any contact with the water. "No fish or other aquatic life forms from the river should be consumed at this stage," says Tozi Mthethwa municipality spokesperson...

Source: [Infrastructurene.ws, 16 Feb. 2015](#)

### **Background**

In 2014, the eThekweni municipality has had to deal with numerous river pollution problems – often as a result of sewage spills contaminating its waters.



At the end of last year, a sewage spill from damaged sewer pipes affected the Mbokodweni River and the Isipingo River. There were also acts of vandalism which has damaged the sewer that affected the Isipingo estuary. Earlier in 2014, reports of the death of thousands of fish in

South Durban, following the contamination of the Isipingo River and Estuary, as a result of factory discharges, made headlines. In August a malfunctioning pump at a sewage substation in the RDP settlement of Waterloo caused a large volume of raw sewage to flow into the uMhlanga River, spreading to the lagoon, the upmarket Mount Edgecombe Estate also experienced a sewage spill in the same month just days before.

There have also been several large sewage spills at eManzintoti, with residents complaining about pollution levels and raw sewage flowing into the aManzintoti and Little aManzintoti rivers.

Source: [Infrastructurene.ws, 08 Dec. 2014](#)

The **Municipal Assistant™** software system helps to prevent incidents of water and sanitation failures by facilitating the efficient management functions related to water treatment and supply. The Municipal Assistant™ was developed as an operational information system to assist with the assessment (on component level including cost and lifespan), operations, maintenance (preventive and reactive) and management of water and wastewater facilities and related infrastructure.

Before the Municipal Assistant system is implemented, or as a standalone service, **WAMTechnology** conducts asset and/or risk assessments in terms of a range of identified hazards including the impact on components of the infrastructure critical for water supply and sanitation. Among others, hazards associated with relevant infrastructure age, capacity and condition; as well as operations and maintenance status; 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 related to water supply and public health.

In doing so, serious threats to community and ecosystems health are early identified along with priorities of preventive maintenance.

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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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