

Water and Sanitation in the News

Municipal workers fill field with raw sewage

Disciplinary actions will be taken against municipal workers who have pumped raw sewage into a field, the Naledi municipality in North West said recently. "The incident was reported on Monday [28 September]; we started with investigation and obtained photographs. It is not our policy [to pump raw sewage into the field]," water and sanitation manager in the Naledi municipality Leon Pretorius said. He said the incident was being investigated and action would be taken against workers involved.



The Democratic Alliance (DA) in Naledi, said it has photographic evidence in their possession, showing Naledi municipality officials pumping raw sewage into a field near Devondale village. "Workers of Naledi were caught on camera, the second time in a month, while they were busy pumping out sewage from their tankers into an open field," DA councillor in the municipality Louwna Pretorius said. He said municipal manager Modisenyane Thompson Segapo had previously promised to give urgent attention to the problem of sewage dumping, but has ignored the problem and broken his promise. "For this reason, the DA will report Segapo to the Green Scorpions, under the Environmental Management Inspectorate of the Department of Environment," she said.

Pretorius said last month raw sewage was running down the streets in Vryburg, due to sewage pipes that broke because of overall lack of maintenance to the sewage disposal system. "Some residents of Vryburg have permanent sewage welling up in their backyards," she added. "An investigation is long overdue as the municipality continues to ignore the sewage crisis, and now is making it worse by dumping raw sewage into open fields".

Source: [Infrastructurene.ws](#), 06 October 2015

Context

Raw sewage dumping often takes place when the relevant waste water treatment plants are too small to handle increasing load demands, are not working or not being operated properly. There are 821 sewerage plants operated by municipalities in South Africa. These process sewage from towns, clean it and then release it back into rivers and dams. Each municipality needs a permit for this, but submissions over recent years to Parliament show that dozens do not. The last major report into the plants, the 2012 Green Drop audit by water affairs, found that 317 were in a "critical state". Only 40 were in an "excellent situation". The effect of this is recorded by civil society groups countrywide. Through social media pages and court action, they have myriad examples of sewage flowing through homes, rivers and wetlands, contaminating farmlands too. Most of the time the culprit is the nearby municipal treatment plant. Lack of maintenance is often cited as a reason for sewage being released.

Source: [Mail & Guardian](#), 31 July 2015

Preventative Maintenance Principles & Guidelines: Week 9

General Maintenance Guidelines

Numerous water and waste water treatment works and infrastructure are much more than 20 years old. Consequently, most supplier's guarantees have expired, manuals are lost, and standard operating procedures are not in place, etc. It is, however, important to start somewhere (with maintenance procedures), as all old equipment currently in use are still very critical to the delivery of sufficient quality & quantity drinking and treated waste water. For instance, some general maintenance guidelines regarding **valves** are:

Valves – 1 to 6 Months

- Clean any dirt/oil/contaminant
- Lubricate spindles, gears & other working components
- Move valve from open to close position and back particularly if not in regular use
- Ensure bolts are properly tightened
- Examine for any mechanical damage or corrosion
- Remove corrosion & paint

Source: [Outcomes from Advanced Technical Process Controllers' Workshops 2011 & 2015](#)

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