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MEDIA RELEASE

To: **News Editors**
From: **Kgamanyane Mapholegela**
Director: Communications & Stakeholder Management
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CITY OF JOHANNESBURG TO IMPLEMENT LEVEL 2 WATER RESTRICTIONS AND TARIFFS FROM 1 DECEMBER 2026

The City of Johannesburg, through its water utility, Johannesburg Water, will implement Level 2 water restrictions and restriction tariffs from 1 December 2026 to protect the municipality's water supply system and prevent reservoir depletion.

The decision follows a directive from the Gauteng Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) instructing all Gauteng municipalities to implement Level 2 water restrictions, as well as a water scarcity and emergency declaration by the Johannesburg Water Board under Section 58 of the City's Water Services By-laws.

Johannesburg's water network is under severe pressure due to sustained high water demand, warmer temperatures and prolonged dry weather patterns:

- Johannesburg is consuming an average of 1 709 million litres of water per day against its bulk supply allocation of 1 524 million litres per day – an excess of roughly 185 million litres daily.

- Although the City already receives 27% above its permanent Rand Water apportionment, heavy draw-off pushed municipal storage reserves down to 8 hours (well below the required 24-hour safety buffer), leading to intermittent water supply in some areas.

- Level 2 restrictions aim to reduce daily water consumption by 200 million litres per day to stabilise reservoirs, protect infrastructure, and restore reliable water supply across Johannesburg.

Managing water scarcity starts within the municipality itself. Alongside tariff measures, the City of Johannesburg and its entities are enforcing strict internal operational adjustments:

- All City of Johannesburg departments, properties, and municipal entities must stop irrigating parks, public spaces and gardens with drinking water.

- The Johannesburg Roads Agency (JRA) and its contractors must stop using drinking water for road construction, and Johannesburg Water and its contractors must stop using drinking water for sewer jetting – both will use treated effluent from the City's six Wastewater Treatment Works instead.

- Johannesburg Water is accelerating leak and burst-pipe repairs, retrofitting smart pressure-reducing valves, deploying up to 400 acoustic noise loggers to detect underground leaks, restricting high-usage bulk water meters, and applying 20% zone-meter flow reductions in deemed-consumption and prepaid-meter areas where tariff changes do not regulate usage.

- The Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department (JMPD) will actively enforce Level 2 water-use restrictions under the City's Water Services By-laws.

Level 2 introduces both mandatory water-use restrictions and adjusted residential water tariffs:

1. Residents may not use municipal drinking water to irrigate gardens, hose down hard surfaces (such as driveways, paving or walls), or dampen building sand.

2. Higher water-use bands attract higher rates per kilolitre (1 kL = 1 000 litres) to discourage excessive consumption.

The Level 2 residential restriction tariffs apply to all household and multi-dwelling residential accounts from 1 December 2026. Because deemed-consumption customers pay a fixed charge and prepaid consumption is not regulated through monthly stepped billing, these areas are not affected by the stepped tariff adjustment and will instead be managed through a 20% flow reduction on zone supply meters.

Commercial, industrial, and other non-residential categories are not included in this residential tariff adjustment, although all water users must comply with Level 2 water-use restrictions.

Although the tariff tier is labelled *"Level 2 – 20%"* in the City's tariff schedule, as a customer, your water bill does not increase by a flat 20%.

Johannesburg uses a progressive (stepped) billing system. Your monthly water usage is divided into consumption bands, and you pay the rate for each band as you use it – not the highest rate on your entire consumption. Households that use less water pay significantly less per kilolitre than heavy water users.

Under normal residential tariffs, the first 6 kilolitres (6 000 litres) of monthly water consumption are charged at R0.00 per kL.

Under Level 2 restrictions, the 0–6 kL band is charged at R7.80 per kL. A household using exactly 6 kL in a month will pay R46.80 for water consumption instead of R0.00 (excluding VAT and other standard municipal charges).

Worth noting is that qualifying registered indigent / Expanded Social Package (ESP) households will continue to receive their approved Free Basic Water relief in line with the City's indigent policy.

The table below illustrates how Level 2 affects typical monthly household water consumption charges (excluding VAT, refuse, sanitation and other fixed charges):

Monthly Household Usage	Normal Tariff Charge	Level 2 Tariff Charge	Extra Monthly Cost	Overall Change
6 kL (6,000 litres)	R0.00	R46.80	+R46.80	New charge
10 kL (10,000 litres)	R134.28	R196.72	+R62.44	+46.50%
15 kL (15,000 litres)	R309.48	R404.27	+R94.79	+30.63%
20 kL (20,000 litres)	R555.13	R703.37	+R148.24	+26.70%

Practical Ways to Save Water and Keep Your Bill Low

The City recognises the financial pressures facing households. Small daily adjustments can protect Johannesburg's water supply while helping you manage your monthly bill:

- Fix leaking taps, toilets, and pipes immediately.
- Take shorter showers and turn off taps while brushing teeth or shaving.
- Do not water gardens or wash paved areas with a hosepipe.
- Only run washing machines and dishwashers with full loads.
- Check your water meter regularly to spot hidden underground leaks early.
- Report burst pipes and street leaks to Johannesburg Water immediately.

Group Finance, through the Revenue Shared Services Centre (RSSC), is working with Johannesburg Water and Group ICT to ensure the Level 2 tariffs are accurately configured on the municipal billing system ahead of 1 December 2026.

The updated rates will reflect on customer statements according to each property's meter-reading and billing cycle. Residents are encouraged to review their monthly statements, monitor their consumption, and continue paying their municipal accounts by the due date.

"Every household and business in Johannesburg has a vital role to play in preventing a water supply crisis. By respecting the Level 2 water-use restrictions and cutting unnecessary consumption, residents can protect both our city's reservoirs and their own monthly household budgets," Director for Group Finance Communications and Stakeholder Management, Kgamanyane Maphologela.

SAVE WATER. REDUCE CONSUMPTION. EVERY DROP COUNTS.

- ENDS -

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