

03 Mar 2017

# Water restrictions lifted in Gauteng

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Water and Sanitation Minister Nomvula Mokonyane has announced the lifting of water restrictions in [Gauteng](#) with immediate effect.



**“I trust that the lessons learnt on responsible water use will become a norm and a way of life for us all, and that we will adapt to the realities of being a water-scarce country,” said Minister Mokonyane.**

Minister Mokonyane’s announcement comes in the wake of a dramatic change in the water situation following torrential rains that flooded most parts of the country in the past 10 days.

The [Vaal Dam](#) is 97.8% full and is expected to reach its capacity by Tuesday.

In the past week, officials of the Department of Water and Sanitation have been monitoring dam levels around the clock to control water flow.

Speaking at a media briefing held at Vaal Dam on Sunday, Minister Mokonyane said the departmental officials released volumes of surplus water on Saturday at [Bloemhof Dam](#) in the [North West](#).

The Minister thanked the people of Gauteng for their efforts in helping the department save water by adhering to the restrictions and **using water wisely and responsibly** in the last four months.

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Communities who live downstream Bloemhof and the Vaal dams have been warned to relocate, as they may be exposed to possible floods.

Minister Mokonyane said looking at where the country comes from a few months ago, when the dams averaged a lowly 54.8% in April 2016, 49.1% in December and 60.5% on February 20, a great deal had been achieved.

**More than 50 dams above 100%**

The department monitors 211 dams. Of these, 13 are below 10%, with 33 between 10% and 40%. Of [South Africa's](#) dams, 57 are above 100%.

However, the Minister said the decision to relax the ban in Gauteng did not mean an automatic countrywide moratorium on water restrictions as some regions are still reeling from the effects of the debilitating drought that started in South Africa two years ago.

"For instance, stringent restrictions would remain in place in [Western Cape](#) which is experiencing the worst drought conditions in its history. The [City of Cape Town](#) has introduced Level 3B water restrictions to try to cope with the severe water shortages," said Minister Mokonyane.

"However, the restrictions in the province may be reviewed later when winter rains begin to fall in the region. Water restrictions in other provinces would remain in place and would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis together with the affected municipalities and if need be, they too will be advised to lift the ban."

The lifting of restrictions will bring relief to many water users, especially farmers, who have been at the receiving end of the stranglehold of the stringent restrictions because of insufficient water in the past 12 months.

The good rains have filled all the dams in North West, except Molatedi and [Groot Marico](#) dams, where rivers are swelling and are expected to fill the two dams soon.

Wet conditions continue in [KwaZulu-Natal](#) where most dam levels are also reported to be rising fast and some of them are expected to reach their capacity in a matter of days.

Minister Mokonyane, however, warned that the rains did not mean an end to the country's water woes and urged all South Africans to continue to use water wisely. – [SAnews.gov.za](#)

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