

Be a formidable water detective at home

Danie Mouton

Day Zero is looming.

We are all charged with the responsibility to save water at all costs.

Every drop counts.

Oh yes, we can blame others for neglecting their duty.

Local government is in a mess and officials face an uphill struggle to fix leaks and install infrastructure.

Blaming is no solution, however.

The only option is to take responsibility where we can make a difference. Some water is entrusted to you and me, and we have a choice how responsible we use it.

The more we save, the more is available for others, and for the day of tomorrow.

Did you know, you are appointed as a water saving detective in your home?

At your workplace?

Let's be practical. What follows is a water saving checklist. The idea is to activate your own creativity.

Look at the following tips. What can you do, or add to this list?

- Do you close the tap when you brush your teeth? You may use a cup of water while brushing your teeth. Up to six litres of water per minute can be saved.
- Did you place a full cooldrink bottle or a brick in the cistern of your toilet? This way water is saved every time you flush. And do you flush only when it is unavoidable?
- Keep a jug of cold water in the fridge. This way the tap does not need to run a while for cooler water to emerge.
- Are the cold and warm taps in your bathroom clearly marked? Do not wait for warm water to emerge from the cold tap. This way you or a visitor waste a lot of water before the mistake is realised.
- Do the people in your home shower two minutes or shorter? A shower can use between six and 45 litres per minute. On Youtube you will find "2-minute shower songs" you can use to time yourself.
- A bath on average uses about 160 litres of water, while a shower of five minute may use 60 litres. If you need to bath, use only a little water. Share bathwater within the family. Use the bathwater to water plants in the garden or flush the toilet.
- Do you fill your washing machine before running a cycle? Some washing machines have an eco-function to use less water. Others use the same amount of water whether fully laden or not.
- Do you have a jug and bucket as your wash basin and shower? You may use it to save the first cold water emerging from the warm tap. You can also use it to catch grey water, which can be used in the garden.
- Do you water the garden with a watering can? The use of hoses is currently forbidden. Remember a hose easily wastes 1 000 litres of water per hour. Cover the soil around your plants with organic matter to keep the soil moist. Water early or late in the day to reduce evaporation. Replace water hungry plants with more hardened plants which are less dependent on watering.

- Did you invest in a rainwater tank to catch liquid gold from your roof? You will be surprised how much water can be gathered this way. It will bring a form of water security to you and your family.
- Are you aware of any leaking taps in your house? It can easily waste 15 litres of water per day.
- Do you have invisible leaks in the water pipes on your property? Close all taps in your house for 15 minutes. Nobody may use any water during this period. Check your water meter before and after the 15 minutes. If the water meter registered water flow, you probably have a leak. Fixing the leak will save water and obviously money too.
- Is the tap running when you clean vegetables or fruit? Or do you first put some water in a small plastic dish?
- Rather use a broom to clean paving rather than washing it down. Using a vacuum cleaner instead of mopping house floors also saves water.
- Do you know how much water is used to manufacture certain items in your household? It takes 1 litre of water to manufacture the 500ml water bottle you buy coldrink or bottled water in. Replace plastic with glass. Recycling obviously helps to save water.

Please download the water saving checklist and mark the measures followed in your household. Go to www.ngkok.co.za/water/saving.pdf.

And, yes, please keep praying for rain.

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