



Coronavirus Exposure DWS advisory

Boil water in rural areas before use to fight COVID-19

As the COVID-19 pandemic figures rise in South Africa, the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) is urging people in rural areas who still fetch their water from rivers and streams to boil it first before they use it for drinking, washing and cooking to avoid contracting the disease.

The World Health Organisation has warned that behavioural change in hygiene practices is key to combating the spread of the dreaded disease that has wreaked havoc and claimed lives of over 4 000 people and incapacitated thousands of others across the globe.

With the rampant pollution of water resources in South Africa, the Department is concerned that some rural people who depend on rivers for water for basic use may be exposed to the virus that causes Corona. It is for that reason that the Department is asking people to either boil their river water or they should add a spoon of disinfectant like Jik to 25 litres of water to kill any germs.

However, the Department emphasizes the importance of the washing of hands with water and soap as the easiest means of averting infections. Traditionally, the Department celebrates the annual Global Handwashing campaign on 15 October, though the washing of hands must be practiced every day before touching food and after visiting the toilet.

The Department is celebrating Water Month in March. This year is unprecedented as it has cancelled most of its scheduled events in line with President Ramaphosa's instruction for the cancellation of all non-essential government events. However, the Department joins the government in its central message for all South Africans to wash their hands frequently to minimize the contraction of the Corona virus.

End

Issued by the Department of Water & Sanitation