

Water and Sanitation Frequently Asked Questions

How much water is supplied by the Mangaung Local Municipality per day?

About 169 000 000 litres on average per day, which is about 68 full Olympic size swimming pools.

What is free basic water?

Free basic water is the amount of water provided for free, introduced in the year 2001 to accommodate the residents with willingness to pay for services but cannot afford to pay.

How much water is free basic water?

6 000 Litres per household per month.

Who qualifies for free basic water?

Currently, every household does but ideally it is only indigent households.

Is the free basic water a sustainable option?

Yes, only if all the residents of the **Mangaung** Local Municipality start to practice water conservation and demand management practices to reduce inefficient use of water and pollution, including payment for services rendered.

Why should people pay for water because water is free?

Residents pay for services that make clean potable water available to their point of consumption not for water, water is free.

What happens in a case the consumer does not pay for water services?

The **Mangaung** Local Municipality will impose upon the consumer's supply the water conservation measures such as providing the consumer with free basic water only until the account is settled.

What happens in a case the consumer cannot afford to pay the entire amount?

The consumer can arrange to settle the amount in a number of months until settled in full whilst enjoying the benefits of unrestricted flow.

What is the normal cause of high water accounts?

The leaks behind the water meter are normally the cause, such as leaking toilets, leaking taps, sprinkler irrigation systems watering for longer periods, pipe bursts especially in winter etc. which is the responsibility of the consumer to fix.

What can the consumer do to influence the reduction in water consumption?

The first step is to retrofit all water outlets with more water efficient plumbing fixtures such as shower heads that uses lesser water, dual flush toilet cisterns, water-wise gardening, wash the car using buckets instead of hoses, read your meter regularly to monitor leaks etc.

What is the municipality doing to influence the reduction in water demand?

The municipality is currently participating in the national programme called Water Conservation and Water Demand Management which has four basic pillars of interventions which are: technical, legislative and institutional, Economic and social awareness and education programmes.

Who treats the tap water supplied to all of Mangaung?

BloemWater and the **Mangaung** Local Municipality. Together we purify water to supply to the whole of Mangaung which includes Bloemfontein, Thaba Nchu and Botshabelo.

Who supplies tap water to our homes?

The **Mangaung** Local Municipality purchases 70% of its water from BloemWater and supply it via our own network of pipes to your home.

Where does water sold by the **Mangaung** Local Municipality actually come from?

The Modder and the Caledon rivers. The Modder River flows into the Rustfontein and Mockes dam which feeds the water treatment plant at Maselspoort. This treatment facility is the property of the municipality. The Welbedacht dam in the Caledon River feeds water to the BloemWater Boards treatment plant situated next to the Caledon River near Wepener. The areas supplying the dams consist mainly of rural and agricultural land with very little industry. Consequently the quality of the water flowing into the dam is very good.

Do rivers such as the Bloemspruit and Renosterspruit affect the Maselspoort water quality?

No – these rivers enter the Modder River downstream from Maselspoort.

Name the three chemicals used to treat water?

Lime, Chlorine and Polyelectrolyte.

Which chemical is used to keep harmful bacteria out of tap water?

Chlorine is added to kill harmful bacteria in water. These harmful bacteria may result in diarrhoea which is classified amongst the greatest killers in the world. However concern has been raised about chlorine causing cancer. This should be seen as a relative risk. One may stand more of a chance of contracting cancer from exposure to sunshine, than that of drinking chlorinated water. Water that is not disinfected with chlorine may pose more of a serious health risk.

Is my tap water completely free of bacteria?

No - certain harmless bacteria are naturally present in water just like you have natural bacteria on your body and in the air you breathe. These harmless bacteria should not be present in high numbers though, as infants and sensitive users may be affected. Chlorine plays an important role in ensuring these number are low and remain low right up until the tap in your home.

Why is the water sometime white when it comes out of the tap?

Air bubbles - due to the high pressure in the distribution system, any trapped air in the system will become dissolved in the water. As soon as the pressure is released by opening the tap, the bubbles reform, giving the water a white appearance. If you pour a glass of water and allow it to stand, the water will clear from the bottom upwards as the air leaves the water.

What is the natural fluoride level in tap water?

0,1mg per litre. This level occurs naturally in the water. No legislation has been passed to enforce the addition of fluoride to tap water.

What is the white stuff in my kettle, on my showerhead and glass shower door?

Minerals - when water is heated calcium and magnesium tend to settle out of the water, causing scale to form on kettle elements and in pipes. This scale forms a protective layer in pipes, kettles and geysers, thereby preventing corrosion.

Why does tap water sometimes have a musty earthy smell?

Geosmin is present in the water. This is a non-toxic substance released by blue green algae. Blue green algae grow well in the summer months due to the longer daylight hours, increased water temperatures and high nutrient levels.

Is my tap water safe to drink?

Yes, the **Mangaung** Local Municipality produces water of a quality that compiles with the most up to date quality standards.

Do I need to install a home treatment device or buy bottled water?

No - tap water is perfectly healthy to drink just as it is. If you do not like the taste of tap water then an inexpensive activated carbon jug may alter the taste. However, the correct maintenance of this jug is crucial in ensuring safe drinking water.

Can tap water tests be performed in my own home?

Depending - certain tests are possible to do in the home but bacteriological analyses are performed in a special (sterile) environment. These are very important tests as they tell you whether the water contains harmful bacteria. People marketing home treatment devices are known to use what we call the "jam jar" experiment. This experiment involves one set of electrodes suspended in tap water and another set in demineralised water. A current is applied across these electrodes. Water, which contain mineral i.e. tap water is a good conductor of electricity. The current will flow and the iron electrode literally starts to dissolve in the water causing a brownish green suspension to develop. Water which does not contain minerals i.e. demineralised water is not a good conductor of electricity. Therefore a current will not flow and the iron electrode will not dissolve. Do not be fooled.

How much water does each person use per day per household?

Approximately 170 litres per person per day.

What activity in the home uses the most water?

Toilet flushing. Most toilets use between 9 and 12 litres per flush.