

[Media Statement]



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CENTRAL BASIN ACID MINE DRAINAGE SITE AFFECTED BY ONGOING RAINFALL

Today, Trans-Caledon Tunnel Authority (TCTA) announced that the treatment site of the Central Basin AMD Plant has been significantly affected by the recent increased rainfall in the province.

TCTA operates and maintains three Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) plants within 3 basins, namely Central Basin (Germiston), Eastern Basin (Springs) and Western Basin (Randfontein), on behalf of the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS).

The Central Basin AMD Plant is designed for a water treatment capacity of 84ML/day, with a current treatment average operating capacity of 60ML/day, including planned outages and shutdowns calculated over a year. The plant has not been operating at full capacity due to challenges with the AMD pumps that abstract water from the mine void and the scaling on the discharge line to the Elsbergspuit.

The Executive Manager for Project Management and Implementation, Johannes Mavuso, said that; “The plant has been operating without any major interruptions for the past year, averaging 60ML/day (18% below the operating capacity), and the shaft level was maintained well below the decant point”.

The excessive rain experienced during the current rainy season has caused a spike in the water level in the Central Basin and, as a result, the possibility of a decant remains high at or around the South-East Vertical Shaft, west of Farrar Park, Boksburg.

Mavuso said; “Though indications are that the current situation could lead to a possible decant of AMD, there is no imminent danger at this stage, and the public will be kept informed of any major developments”.

To mitigate the risk of decanting on the plant, TCTA in partnership with DRD, has implemented an interim measure, which will increase the capacity of the discharge pipeline to enable the AMD plant to operate at a peak capacity of approximately 72ML/d. In addition to this, there has also been an increase in the current pumping and treatment capacity from 60ML/d to approximately 68ML/d, effected from late January 2023. The impact of this measure against the rise of water levels is being monitored daily.

TCTA has been experiencing technical challenges with the AMD pumps and the sludge discharge pipeline, thus preventing the AMD Plant from operating at the desired capacity. However, the following permanent solutions are being implemented, to get the Central Basin AMD Plant to operate at the desired capacity:

- The construction of the sludge discharge pipeline has commenced and is planned to be completed in June 2023.
- The temporary pump will be replaced with a larger rebuilt pump to increase the AMD total pumping capacity to 82ML/d, and this is planned to be completed in March 2023.

Although the pumps will be able to pump 84ML/d, the full capacity of the plant will only be achieved once the discharge pipeline has been completed.

“The implementation of the interim and permanent solutions will enable the AMD Plant to pump and treat at the peak operating capacity of 82ML/d by end of March 2023 and we hope that the level of rainfall will ease up to give the plant an opportunity to stabilize the pumping levels”; said Mavuso.

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