

219. Hon. W Pretorius (DA) asks the Hon. MEC responsible for COGTA&HS: Mr. T Mokoena.

In view of the continued instability of water provision in the Mohokare Local Municipality, specifically affecting the towns of (a) Rouxville, (b) Smithfield, and (c) Zastron:

1. What are the reasons for the continued water outages in each of the three towns?
2. To what extent has the reported municipal workers' strike contributed to these water outages?
3. What short-term and long-term interventions have been implemented to mitigate and prevent further water outages in these areas?
4. In view of allegations that the water outage in Smithfield was specifically caused by a lack of chlorine, is it accurate that the outage was caused by a shortage of chlorine? If so, (i) what were the reasons for the failure to supply chlorine, (ii) who is responsible for the procurement and supply of chlorine in Mohokare and (iii) what measures have been taken to ensure this does not reoccur? If not, what caused the water outage?

NO RESPONSE

Converted to Oral: No. 21. 07/07/2025

RESPONSE 04/08/2025

1. The Mohokare Local Municipality is currently facing significant challenges in maintaining stable water provision across its three towns due to a combination of human resource, electricity outages and infrastructure-related issues.

The primary reason for the ongoing water outages is that many of the water process controllers and water supervisors are participating in an unprotected strike. This industrial action has resulted in a critical shortage of essential personnel, leaving the municipality without the capacity to operate and maintain its water systems effectively.

As a consequence of this staff shortage:

- Routine operations and emergency responses have been disrupted.
- Maintenance of aging water infrastructure, such as pipelines, has slowed or halted altogether.
- Leakages in the old water pipeline systems, especially in certain areas, remain unattended, further exacerbating the outages.

The combination of a reduced workforce and deteriorating infrastructure has led to continued and widespread water service instability across all three towns in the municipality.

2. The municipal workers' strike has contributed significantly to the water outages in the Mohokare Local Municipality.

While the water system already faces structural challenges, the strike has amplified these issues and directly impacted the municipality's ability to manage and maintain basic water services.

Extent of the Strike's Contribution:

Operational Capacity Severely Reduced:

The water process controllers and water supervisors who are on strike play a critical role in the daily operation, monitoring, and regulation of water treatment plants and distribution networks.

Their absence means key activities—such as water quality monitoring, pump station operation, leak detection, and emergency repairs—are not being carried out or are being handled by underqualified or overstretched staff.

The strike has not just contributed to the water outages it has intensified and prolonged them. While infrastructure and electricity issues are structural and ongoing, the absence of key personnel due to the strike has turned a difficult situation into a critical service crisis.

3. Short-Term Interventions:

Deployment of Emergency Teams:

The municipality has attempted to assign available technical staff to perform critical maintenance and attend to urgent leaks and breakdowns.

In some cases, retired or temporary personnel have been called in to fill operational gaps during the strike.

Long-Term Interventions:

Infrastructure Upgrades:

Plans are underway (or being proposed) to replace aging water pipelines and upgrade pump stations to reduce leakages and improve reliability.

Long-term budgeting includes proposals for modernizing water treatment facilities to improve operational efficiency.

4. Yes, based on the available information and allegations, it is accurate to say that the water outage in Smithfield was at least partially caused by a shortage of chlorine, which is a critical chemical used in the water purification process.

(i) Chlorine to the amount of 30 tons were procured and delivered to Mohokare Local Municipality on the 16th April 2025. The Municipality is in a process of procuring a second batch of Chlorine, delivery is estimated to be 16 May 2025.

The root cause of the chlorine shortage is due to the non-payment of service providers who supply the municipality with water treatment chemicals due to cash flow challenges

(ii) Mohokare has appointed a panel of 6 suppliers for water chemicals for a period of 3 Years (31 March 2023 - 01 April 2026). A challenge experienced by supply chain office is that only 2 suppliers are active/participating, whereas the Municipality strives to rotate all suppliers in the panel.

(iii) A decision is to source quotations from other suppliers who are also not within the panel to advance competitiveness in pricing, availability of material and value for money.

The Municipality intends to terminate the contacts of non-participating suppliers, and widen the supplier listing. This will ensure that many suppliers and even manufactures participate in this procurement.

The financial position of the Municipality does not always allow the procurement of maximum supplies of chlorine to be procured at once as it becomes difficult to pay the suppliers after delivery of chemicals.