



City of Johannesburg

Johannesburg Water SOC Ltd

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22 July 2025

**Dr. Ferrial Adam
Executive Director
WaterCAN**

RE: Johannesburg Water – Drinking Water Quality Compliance

Dear Dr. Adam

We refer to your memo dated 18 July regarding concerns about Johannesburg Water's compliance with critical microbiological standards. At this stage, we do not intend to address every allegation contained in your letter. We reserve our rights to respond more fully should it become necessary.

Introduction

Johannesburg Water implements a comprehensive Water Safety Plan to ensure the provision of safe drinking water. This plan applies a risk-based approach across all stages of our supply system, focusing on water quality, acceptability, and quantity to protect public health.

Issues raised by WaterCAN

Your memo highlights the following concerns:

1. **Turbidity compliance** in May 2025 at 87.4%, below the minimum threshold of 95%, noting potential implications for effective disinfection.
2. **Microbiological compliance** in March and April 2025 recorded at 98.9% and 98.1%, respectively, below the stipulated standard.

You also requested further clarity on:

- Whether these failures are isolated incidents or indicative of a recurring pattern.
- The steps Johannesburg Water is taking to address and rectify these lapses.
- Why overall microbiological compliance is below 99% and actions to achieve the required standard.

Response to issues raised

1. Turbidity variance

Directors:

Ms Dineo Majavu (Chairperson), Mr Ntshavheni Mukwevho (Managing Director and Executive Director),
Mr Kgaugelo Mahlaba (Chief Financial Officer and Executive Director), Mr Sipho Mthembu, Ms Zandile Meeleso, Mr Pholoso Matjele,
Mr Kgaile Mogoye, Mr Molate Mashifane, Ms Pamela Mabece, Mr Collen Sambo, Mr Makoko Makgonye, Ms Thabiso Kutumela,
Mr Kefiloe Mokoena

Ms Kethabile Mabe (Company Secretary),
Johannesburg Water SOC Ltd
Registration Number: 2000/029271/30

- Johannesburg Water has engaged extensively with our bulk water supplier to address variances in water quality. A mutual resolution was reached to manage the increased colour in the drinking water supply.
- At the beginning of January 2025, the Vaal Dam level was critically low at 23.1% due to insufficient raw water transfers from the Lesotho Highlands Scheme. Significant rainfall between January and April 2025 resulted in the dam levels rising rapidly to 121.5%, submerging riparian vegetation and introducing natural organic matter (tannins) into the water.
- This natural phenomenon contributed to the yellowish-brown colouration and posed treatment challenges affecting turbidity and colour compliance.
- It is important to note that colour is an aesthetic parameter and does not pose a health risk. Johannesburg Water assures the public that drinking water remains safe for human consumption.

2. Microbiological Compliance

a) Are the failures isolated or recurring?

Johannesburg Water has stringent procedures and protocols aligned to drinking water quality standards, including:

- Incident Management Protocols
- Operational Alerts Monitoring
- Drinking Water Monitoring Plans

These ensure immediate investigation and intervention for any detected water quality variances. The failures noted in March and April 2025 were isolated and were addressed promptly, requiring no incident escalation.

b) Steps to address and rectify lapses

All non-compliances trigger internal reviews and corrective action by our Scientific Services and Operations teams.

c) Why is compliance below 99%, and how is this addressed?

Johannesburg Water's annual microbiological compliance for 2024/2025 stands at 99.4%, within the SANS241:2015 standards. For the months referenced, non-compliances included false positives and results from high-risk sampling points (e.g., mobile tankers and communal taps in informal settlements).

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The WSP has identified risks and mitigation in informal areas, including:

- Hygiene risks at communal taps and tanks.
- Control measures such as:
 1. Public education and awareness campaigns.
 2. Increased sampling coverage in informal areas.
 3. Routine water tank cleaning programmes.
 4. Regular refilling of tanks (on average twice weekly).

Overall Drinking Water Compliance

- Johannesburg Water continues to optimise its monitoring programme to ensure compliance with SANS 241:2015 standard.
- Extensive routine water quality testing is conducted, and any non-compliant samples are immediately investigated, with remedial action taken where required.
- Incident Management Procedures outline protocols for public notification should any significant risk be confirmed.

Conclusion

Johannesburg Water remains committed to supplying safe drinking water that meets national standards. Despite the challenges posed by natural phenomena and informal supply connections, the potable water in the City of Johannesburg remains safe for consumption and poses no health risk to residents.

We trust this provides the necessary clarity and assurance.

Yours sincerely,

Ntshavheni Mukwevho
Managing Director

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