



**DRAFT FREE BASIC WATER POLICY
2026/27**

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INDEX

PURPOSE

BACKGROUND

POLICY INTENTIONS

RESPONSIBILITY OF PROVIDING FREE BASIC SERVICES

DEFINITIONS OF A 'BASIC' SUPPLY OF WATER

RECIPIENTS OF FREE BASIC WATER

OPTIONS FOR SUPPLYING FREE BASIC WATER

FREE BASIC WATER

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to outline the Free Basic Water Policy for Sekhukhune District Municipality area of jurisdiction.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 As part of government' strategy to alleviate poverty in South Africa a policy for the provision of a free basic level of services has been introduced. In response to this commitment, the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWA) commenced the implementation of Phase 1 of a national Free Basic Water strategy in February 2001. The Free Basic Water policy is not new to the South African water sector. Indeed, in terms of the Water Services Act 108 of 1997, provision was made for those people who cannot afford to pay for a basic water supply.

3. POLICY INTENTIONS

- 3.1 The primary intention of the policy is to ensure that no one is completely denied access to a water supply because they are unable to pay for the service. Underlying this policy is the recognition that the supply of water at a 'basic' level assists in alleviating poverty, improves community health and frees women from time wasted on carrying water.

4. RESPONSIBILITY OF PROVIDING FREE BASIC SERVICES

- 4.1 While national government has strongly promoted a free basic services initiative, with a view to alleviating poverty, it is local government that is constitutionally mandated to deliver water services. A Free Basic Water policy must therefore be implemented at the local level where services are rendered. The Sekhukhune District Municipality is a Water Service Authority and is responsible for the provision of FBW.

5. DEFINITIONS OF A 'BASIC' SUPPLY OF WATER

- 5.1 The South African standard relating to a 'basic' level of water supply, sufficient to promote healthy living, is based on the internationally accepted standard of 25 litres per person per day. This amounts to 6000 litres per household per month, based on a household of 8 people. This quantity is regulated as part of the national strategy in terms of Section 9 and 10 of the Water Services Act of 1997.
- The Sekhukhune District Municipality adopts the above definition as the basis for this policy. In areas where the District is unable to provide the above amount due to infrastructure or water availability, then the possible quantity that can be provided less than 6kl/household per month will suffice until the municipality is in a position to supply the 6kl.

6. RECIPIENTS OF FREE BASIC WATER

6.1 The recipients of Free Basic Water are poor households. The poor households will be all households meeting the criteria as defined by National Government. However, Sekhukhune District Municipality will consider extending provision of Free Basic Water to all households as and when it can afford.

7. OPTIONS FOR SUPPLYING FREE BASIC WATER.

7.1 Because of the difference in township layout, density, level of existing infrastructure and service level as well as affordability, the same measures cannot be implemented in urban as is the case in rural developments.

The following Free Basic Water provision options will therefore be implemented:

7.1.1. Targeted Credit

- 7.1.1.1 All indigent/poor consumers serviced through a metered yard connection shall receive the first 6kl free of charge. Monthly basic levy may be charged to all those consumers who exceed a consumption of 6kl irrespective of whether they are indigent families or not. Various pricing options will also be considered for consumption over 6kl.
- 7.1.1.2 “Indigent” means any household which is qualifies for free basic services, earning a combined gross income equivalent to or less than two times the Government pension grant as prescribed by the National Department of Social Development or in line with the National Indigence Framework issued by the Department Local Government (DLG), who qualify, according to the policy, for rebates/remissions, support or a services subsidy. Examples hereof include pensioners, the unemployed and child-headed families who are unable to fully meet their payment obligations for municipal services.

7.2. Service Level Targeting

- 7.2.1 All water consumed from the communal stand taps, unmetered stand taps and any other supply which constitutes the minimum level of service may be considered to be FBW, provided the average consumption of such service per household per month is equal or less than the maximum FBW provision by the municipality.
- 7.2.2 This Policy will be progressively developed to ensure the long term affordability, effectiveness and sustainability of the provision of free basic water to the targeted consumers within the municipality.

CERTIFICATE OF ENDORSEMENT:

This Policy shall come into effect on the date of endorsement and shall cease only in the event where such changes/variations has been reduced to writing, approved by council and been signed by the Speaker. Unless in the event where any changes in any applicable Act, Legislation has jurisdiction to supersede.

For and on behalf of Municipality

Date