

KZN's Hazelmere Dam wall intact, emergency evacuation plan activated

The KwaZulu-Natal Water and Sanitation Department has assured community members that the wall of Hazelmere Dam is intact. Director in the Dam Safety Regulation Unit within the department Wally Ramokopa said the dam reached 100% capacity in the past 24 hours and started spilling on Monday evening.



Source: [DWS/Twitter](#)

He said the department, together with its entity, Umgeni Water, have since released water from the dam to prevent the dam wall, which is still under construction, from flooding the gallery through anchor cable recess openings in the dam's spillway crest which might affect the dam's stability.

"An Emergency Evacuation Plan has been activated in conjunction with the province's Provincial Disaster Management Centre and we continue to monitor water levels to ensure that we act speedily should water levels increase and communities downstream have to be evacuated," Ramokopa said.

The department continues to monitor water levels on an hourly basis and has alerted communities located downstream of the dam to steer away from the infrastructure.

“ Water is released from Hazelmere Dam into uMdloti River. The dam has a spillway meant to release excess water once 100% storage is reached. [#KZNfloods](#) [pic.twitter.com/OGkaCWtsPn](#)— Water&SanitationRSA (@DWS_RSA) [April 12, 2022](#) ”

Outlet pipes opened at max capacity

"The outlet pipes at the Hazelmere Dam have been opened at maximum capacity in order to lower the water levels. We really would like to caution communities that water levels on the uMdloti River will rise sharply as a result of the opened valves and plead for their cooperation should the urgent need to implement the evacuation plan occur," Ramokopa said.

Ramokopa also assured communities that most of the country's biggest dams are designed to withstand floods, and "there is no need for people to be alarmed for possible infrastructure collapse".

Monitor for overtopping

He further called on owners of smaller dams to monitor their dam levels for any potential of overtopping which may occur due to insufficient capacity to discharge water through the spillways.

"Private dam owners should alert the emergency teams of communities residing downstream of the dams should the need arise. Our plea really is to communities situated upstream and downstream of the dam to be extra careful during this period.

"The evacuation plan is to safeguard the loss of life and nothing else. Of importance to us is to ensure that no-one is impacted from the heavy rains and flooding," Ramokopa said.

The department has sent a stern warning against building on floodplains, as the repercussions are often irreparable.

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