



**Enquiries:** Mr. HA Akwenye, Manager: Corporate Communications, Marketing & Public Participation

7 January 2021

## **STATUS UPDATE ON RECENT HEAVY RAINS AND FLOODING IN WINDHOEK BY THE MAYOR, HIS WORSHIP, DR. JOB S AMUPANDA**

Dear residents,

Compliments of the season.

Windhoek is currently experiencing heavy rains, flash flooding, and overflowing rivers. Whilst we are thankful for the abundant rain, there is a concern that flash floods may cause damage to private and public property (for example electricity poles and roads), which could present further risks of power outages and unsafe roads and driving conditions. Our current assessment of the situation reveals that flood incidents are caused by blocked storm water pipes, leaking roofs and/or the lack of adequate storm water drainage. The incidents in informal settlements are worsened by dwellings built in riverbeds or low-lying areas near rivers or water channels.

The City's emergency response teams attended to 14 flood-related incidents from 30 December 2020 to 5 January 2021. In addition, a multi-disciplinary team comprising officials of the City Police, Human Settlement, Roads and Storm Water, and Emergency and Disaster Risk Management are regularly engaging the relevant stakeholders to mitigate the immediate risks and where appropriate, to relocate communities from flood risk areas to higher grounds.

As of this morning, and based on reported incidents, over 71 households in Havana and eight in Otjomuise are affected, but thankfully, no loss of life has been recorded since the onset of the rainy season on 30 December 2020.

Please stay alert about the dangers of flash floods and in anticipation of future floods expected for the remainder of the week, according to the latest meteorological reports. Residents who are particularly at risk are those residing in low-lying areas, near rivers or downstream of dams. I urge you to take note of the following seasonal rivers and hotspots and to avoid crossing them during heavy rainfall:

Area/Suburb	Street (s)	Area / Suburb	Street (s)
<b>Khomasdal</b>	Franc str/ Kroon Str	<b>Olympia Klein Windhoek</b>	Sean McBride / Robert Str
	Floryn Str / Dollar Str		Sean McBride / Lichtenstein Str
	Diamond Str/ Dollar Str		Hebenstreit Str / Rautenbach Str
	Jasmyn Str/ Rand Str		Bowker Str /Nelson Mandela Avenue
	Rand Str/ Angelier Str		Metje Str / Nelson Mandela Avenue
	Isabella Str/ Rand Str		Nelson Mandela / von Eckenbrecher Str
	Rand Str/ Hannekam Str		Nelson Mandela / Ugab Str
	Rand/ Safari		Outeniqua / Kilimanjaro Str
<b>Katutura</b>	Clemence Kapuuo Str	<b>Hochland Park</b>	Eros Road / Kilimanjaro Str
	Siegfried Tjitemisa Str		Pelican Str / Tauben Str
	Sanhedrin Str / Sinai Str	<b>Avis</b>	Von Golddammer / Coetzee Str
	Sinagoge Str / Sanhedrin Str		Avis / Christa Davids Str
	Sion Str / Sinagoge Str	<b>CBD</b>	Independence Avenue (Novel Ford)

Residents are also advised not to dump waste in riverbeds and public, open spaces, because this blocks storm-water systems and causes flooding.

**Mitigation measures (What can you do to minimise the impact of flooding on property/human life?)**

If you live in a frequently-flooded area, it is advisable to:

- Stockpile sandbags;
- Have shovels and other material readily available to counter sudden floods or strong winds;
- Seal the roof of your dwelling;
- Make sure all drainage systems in your area, for example rivers, streams, channels and openings in boundary walls, are clean of debris and garden refuse, because it will block drainage systems and cause flooding;
- If you observe dirty or blocked drainage systems, or a collection of water at speed humps which hinders the natural flow of water, please call the following numbers:
  - ROADS AND STORM WATER DIVISION (DURING WORKING HOURS): **061 - 2902363** OR;
  - OUR 24-HOUR EMERGENCY SERVICES CONTROL ROOM: **061 - 211 111**.

#### **Additional precautions:**

People living in low-lying areas must take EXTRA care during storms, as sudden flash floods might affect them. Please consider the following safety measures:

- To move to a safe distance from low-lying areas, to elevated areas before water levels rise;
- Never try to walk, swim or drive into fast-flowing water, even if the water appears to be shallow - it can sweep you off your feet and / or your vehicle off the road;
- Do not try to drive over a low-water bridge if water is flowing across it strongly;
- Teach your children not to swim in riverbeds, streams and ponds in open areas;
- Keep your important documents in water-resistant containers;
- Have emergency numbers at hand;
- Make sure that you know where your family members are during flash floods; and
- Make sure that every family member knows how to stay safe during a flood.

#### **Traveling in vehicles during a storm**

- If you approach a flooded area, turn around and take an alternative, safe route;
- If your vehicle stalls, abandon it immediately. Get out and move to higher ground - lives have been lost during attempts to move stalled vehicles. Your life is more

important than your vehicle!

- Always obey road traffic signs, roadblocks and instructions from law enforcement officers. Do not take risks! Do not be inquisitive at accident scenes - it hampers the efforts of emergency workers - rather move along; and
- Be careful when driving on wet gravel or sandy roads. Reduce your speed and adapt your driving to the prevailing weather conditions. Go slow!

### **The City's ongoing measures**

The City's Disaster Risk Management Committee and flood preparedness standby team are activated during this period and will meet on a weekly basis to assess, plan and deploy the necessary responses.

### **Relocation of residents in flood and buffer zones**

Most of the flooding incidents relate to roads/stormwater issues (for example illegal dwellings erected and disposal of refuse in riverbeds and channels), and building compliance violations. The Human Settlement division is in regular communication with affected residents and will render assistance in terms of relocation efforts and related incidents as they arise. Please refer your calls to the numbers provided in this message.

Where necessary, the City will also initiate regular patrols in hotspots to inspect stormwater channels, for the remainder of the rainy season.

Finally, I call on all of us to remain calm, vigilant and to exercise due caution. The weather projections indicate that more flash floods are expected for the remainder of the week. Regular updates will be communicated as new information is received. Please be assured that the current situation is under control and subject to regular monitoring.

I would also like to request your patience and encourage you to make use of the emergency contact details provided. Individual City officials are not able to assess and prioritise immediate threats. It is imperative that residents contact the **Roads and Storm Water division on 061 – 290 2363 during working hours, or the 24-hour Emergency Services**

**Control Room on 061 - 211 111.** There are trained response teams in place to effectively assess and assign appropriate responses based on a prioritised queuing system and your patience is greatly appreciated due to the high call volumes. Please take the precautionary measures indicated earlier as a first step, and allow the City officials sufficient time to assess and prioritise the level of urgency so that the appropriate response mechanisms are deployed, where they are most needed.

I thank you for your understanding and trust that we all remain vigilant during this period.

**Yours in duty of care,**

**MAYOR**