Maintain toilets to protect infrastructure and residents

This week most informal settlement residents reported having access to water, but sanitation remains a serious challenge. In addition to posing severe health risks, the lack of maintenance and cleaning of toilets could undermine municipalities’ infrastructure investment.

To respond to the sanitation challenge, Mossel Bay and Knysna developed a Janitorial Program where residents clean communal toilets themselves. But for such programs to be sustainable, municipalities should budget for the provision of detergents, cleaning equipment and educational programs.

GOOD NEWS
- In Witzenberg the municipality has indicated that water tanks may be installed in 2 settlements
- In Knysna, residents have all received black bags from the municipality, whilst 1 of the 4 settlements in Witzenberg received black bags.

HOT SPOTS
- In Knysna and Mossel Bay’s Janitorial Programs, municipalities have stopped providing detergent and cleaning equipment.
- In Knysna, chemical toilets are now only drained once instead of twice a week (as occurred previously). By midweek, the toilets are full and cannot be used.
- In Witzenberg the municipality drains chemical toilets but does not clean the shared flush toilets.
- In Tulbagh in Witzenberg, some residents have reported not having enough water.
- Residents in Witzenberg have also reported that waste is not collected because the municipal truck is broken. Residents’ resort to burning the rubbish that overflows from the skip.

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