

PRESS RELEASE

KEBS ENGAGES WATER BOTTLING FIRMS ON NEW REQUIREMENTS

24th May, 2018... In a bid to ensure standards are adhered to in relations to bottled water, the Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) today had a meeting with over 350 players in the water sector and took them through the requirements in bottling water.

KEBS Managing Director, Charles Ongwae, assured Kenyans that its key role is to facilitate trade, protect consumers from harmful substandard products and also protect the environment.

He however, said there has been an upsurge of unscrupulous players who are promoting unfair trade by producing substandard goods and selling them to consumers. He particularly singled out the water bottling sector where there has been an upsurge of unscrupulous water bottling firms which are not adhering to the laid down standards and procedures.

Ongwae called on Kenyans to embrace the quality culture with a goal to rid the country from substandard goods which are not only harmful to the consumers but also the environment.

“There are people in the country who love short cuts and do not adhere to the law. Today we are announcing 158 water bottling firms that are operating illegally without valid product certification marks and have failed to meet required standards for bottling water” said Mr. Ongwae.

Some of these violations include companies operating from unknown locations, noncompliance to the requirements of the relevant water standards such as the code of hygiene, using suspect sources of water, poor and misleading labelling.

Ongwae also assured the suspended water companies that KEBS is committed to work with them to achieve the required standards as a condition to certification. “We are appealing to those firms whose names appear in the list of illegally operating companies to formalize their operations with KEBS,” added the KEBS MD.

Among the new requirements announced by KEBS include, automation of bottle filling and sealing to safeguard on hygiene practices. All old applicants will be required to have in place an automated bottle filling and sealing mechanism within six months, however new applicants will be required to have automation before they start business. In addition, KEBS has agreed to increase the validity period of Standardization Mark from one year to three years under the following conditions;

- The product should have been operating and certified for a period not less than (6) years
- The manufacturer is required to demonstrate a track record of manufacturing quality products.
- The permit fees for the three years will be paid once (in advance).
- Quality assurance audit will continue at current frequency

KEBS has issued 11,234 permits out of which 671 are for bottled water. So far there are 426 firms with valid permits in the water sector. Another 49 other firms have applied for permits but have not completed the certification process. We have identified that 157 firms that are operating illegally and the should cease operations immediately. KEBS is ready to support these firms get their water certified because we are not in the business of closing industries, but facilitating growth of fair professional business operations and trade practices said Mr. Ongwae.

The standardization body also said they are working with Water Resource Management Authority to test borehole water and we will issue a report indicating the quality of water in the market.

The water bottling business is guided by Kenya Standards/East Africa Standards for bottled water whereby the water classification is determined by the source of the water and the method of purification.

KEBS has called on all stakeholders/consumers to report any issues related to the quality of water or suspect operations to email: water@kebs.org

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About KEBS

Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) is a statutory body established under the Standards Act (CAP 496) of the laws of Kenya. KEBS mandate is to provide standardization solutions for sustainable development. Beyond that, KEBS is mandated to provide standardization and conformity assessment services through;

- Promotion of Standardization in commerce and industry
- Provision of testing and calibration facilities
- Product and system certification
- Undertaking educational work in standardization and practical application of standards
- Maintenance and dissemination of International System of Units (SI) of measurements

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