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02/04/2019



Vale implements two sediment control membranes on the Paraopeba River

The third will be installed today (4/2), weather permitting

Two of the three membranes that will protect the water withdrawal system of the city of Pará de Minas, on the Paraopeba River, are already in operation. The second barrier was installed yesterday (3/2/19) and the first, on Saturday (2/2/19). The third will be installed today (4/2/19), weather permitting. Since yesterday, weather in the region has been challenging, with rain and wind reported.

According to the field teams, the barriers that have already been installed are working well, regardless of the bad weather. Para de Minas is located about 40km from Brumadinho. Vale highlights that this is a preventive measure to guarantee that the city's water supply is not affected.

The initiative is part of the plan presented last January 31st to the Public Prosecutor's Office and to environmental agencies. It will be implemented at three different stretches, where different containment and recovery actions will be taken. The water withdrawal point for Para de Minas is on the third stretch, between Juatuba and the Retiro Baixo power plant. That is why the membrane, which can retain ultrafine sediments, was installed here.

According to the technicians, different actions to protect the water withdrawal system will be taken depending on the watercourse and the sediment present in the river.

See how the sediment control barrier works

The sediment control barrier is 30 meters wide and 2 to 3 meters deep. The structure works as a filtering fabric, making sure that the solid particles (clay, silt, organic matter...), which cause water turbidity and change its transparency are dispersed.

To maintain the anti-turbidity curtains in a vertical position, there are metal chains at the lower edge (submerged part) that avoid the river flow to force the curtain to the surface. The flotation element is a cylinder buoy that can be used to retain the advance of sediments suspended in water.

More information



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