

QC passes tighter rules on LPG distribution

By **CHITO A. CHAVEZ**

To ensure public safety and consumer protection, the Quezon City Council has released an ordinance stating tighter rules for the operation of local liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) outlets, specifically targeting unscrupulous refillers and retailers who defy standard regulations.

Vice-Mayor Joy Belmonte led the passage of Ordinance No. SP-2677, S-2018 that sets a fine of up to ₱5,000 and revocation of business permits against erring LPG wholesalers, retailers, marketers and dealers operating in the city.

She stressed that the operation of unsafe and substandard LPG retail outlets exposes the consuming public to fire, health, and environmental risks while dishonest vendors cheat the consumers by selling a cylinder tank with lighter gas content.

“We at the City Council see the urgent need to enact an ordinance that would curb, if not totally eliminate, the nefarious practices of LPG sellers to protect local consumers from all

forms of danger and fraud,” the vice mayor said in supporting the ordinance filed by 6th District Councilor Donato Matias.

Citing data from the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), Belmonte noted that LPG leaks caused by defective tanks remain one of the main causes of fire –of the 2,522 fire incidents recorded from January to June 2017, 50 were caused by LPG.

The “Quezon City LPG Safety Ordinance” prescribes a minimum standard of operation of LPG business in the city in support of Republic Act 8479, or the “Downstream Oil Industry Deregulation Act of 1998”, that regulates all persons or entities engaged in any activity involving the domestic downstream oil industry, including LPG.

Matias’ ordinance covers all wholesalers and retailers of LPG for household and commercial use within Quezon City.

Aside from complying with the requirements of the city’s Business Permits and Licensing Office (BPLO), refillers must now also secure

a “Special Use Permit” from the Quezon City Council, the ordinance mandated.

LPG wholesalers and retailers, on the other hand, shall also have a Standard Compliance Certificate from the Department of Energy (DOE) to ensure they have proper clearances in selling LPG.

For the awareness and information of consumers, licensed wholesalers and retailers are also required to post safety and informational signs at their establishments such as price display board that has updated prices for each LPG brand and cylinder; No Smoking signs, and the Special Use Permit from the City Council and/or the Business Permit issued by the BPLO.

Wholesalers that violate any provision of the ordinance face a fine of ₱3,000 for the first offense, and for the second offense, a ₱5,000 fine, revocation of business licenses and filing of legal charges in court, according to the ordinance.

Retailers, on the other hand, shall be fined ₱1,500 for the first offense and ₱3,000 for the second offense plus revocation of business permit.