

QCgov't junks jail time for ordinance violators

Under newly approved law, offenders may pay a fine or serve the community

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To ease overcrowding in the detention cells of its police stations, the Quezon City government has come up with a new way of dealing with all ordinance violators instead of jailing them outright.

Under Ordinance No. SP2752 signed by Mayor **Herbert Bautista** on Oct. 4, those who break any local regulation would now be issued ordinance violation receipts—similar to those issued to erring motorists—indicating their offenses and the corresponding fines.

To avoid criminal prosecution, they may choose not to contest their apprehension and voluntarily pay the imposed fine, either to the treasurer of the city or the barangay where they were arrested.

Authored by Councilors **Ranulfo Ludovica** and **Godofredo Liban II**, the ordinance stated that violators would be given five days to pay the fine after which they would be issued official receipts.

Case closed

“After payment... the violator shall present the official receipt to the apprehending enforcer, who shall attach a certified true copy of the receipt to the documents of the case and the case shall be considered closed,” it said.

Failure to meet the deadline for paying the fine would result in a case being filed against the offenders in the Quezon City Prosecutor’s Office.

On the other hand, those who do not have the means to pay the fine may render community service instead.

The ordinance is expected to take effect 15 days after its publication in a newspaper.

Collected fines will be equally shared between the city government and the barangay where the person was apprehended.

The meals and other allowances of the barangay public safety officers and the deputized personnel will be sourced from the barangay’s share.

The local government’s share, on the other hand, will go to the general fund after the deduction of a 10-percent share for the apprehending officer.

The ordinance is expected to alleviate the worsening conditions in detention facilities in Quezon City’s 12 police stations, which also suffer from the same congestion problem affecting national and city penitentiaries.

The Batasan police station’s lockup cell, for example, currently holds 152 male inmates even though it was built for just 40 people. At the Talipapa police station, 176 arrested men are sharing the space meant for only 15 people.

Data from the National Capital Region Police Office showed that over 405,000 people have been apprehended in Metro Manila since June for violating local ordinances.

232,931 violators in city

Based on records, the Quezon City Police District topped the list, with a whopping 232,931 violators, followed by the Manila Police District with 86,762 offenders.

More than half of the 405,000 violators in the metropolis were let off with a warning, while over 74,000 others were fined and more than 49,000 charged in court.