

## QC warns PUV operators violating health protocols

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The Quezon City government yesterday threatened to revoke the business permits of operators of public utility vehicles (PUVs) registered with the city, if they are found violating COVID-19 health protocols in transporting passengers.

Mayor Joy Belmonte made the warning as she approved Executive Order 45, which provides for the strict implementation of minimum health standards in PUVs.

Belmonte said she issued the order amid reports that PUV operators and drivers are not following health measures, especially physical distancing.

Violators would have their business permits revoked under Ordinance 2934. Charges of violation of Republic Act 11332 or the Mandatory Reporting of Notifiable Diseases and Health Events of Public Health Concern Act will also be filed against them.

Under the ordinance, face shields and masks should be worn by the driver and passengers inside PUVs. Physical distancing of at least one meter between passengers and regular disinfection should be followed.

“It is necessary to reaffirm compliance with these health protocols in public transportation, considering the increasing volume of passengers as the economy reopens,” Belmonte said in a statement.

### Free bus rides

Meanwhile, the city government also announced that it added more stops and adjusted the schedule of its free bus ride program to turn it into an “interchange system” where passengers can transfer easily from one bus to another.

According to city administrator Mike Alimurung, commuters can transfer from one bus to another in stops where buses plying different routes meet.

These are E. Rodriguez- Gilmore, Kalayaan- Kamias, AuroraKatipunan and Quezon City Hall interchanges.

The local government has adjusted the interval of buses leaving the starting points on weekdays to between 12 and 20 minutes during peak hours and 30 minutes during off-peak hours.

Additional bus stops have been put up along the routes to make it easier for commuters to reach their destination.

To date, the bus ride program has eight routes: Quezon City Hall to Cubao, Litex/IBP Road to Quezon City Hall, General Luis, Mindanao Avenue corner Quirino Highway Robinsons Magnolia, Ortigas Avenue Extension and Muñoz. Another route is Welcome Rotonda to Aurora Boulevard/Katipunan Avenue.

On Dec. 24, city hall said the bus service would operate from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m. only. It will not operate on Dec. 25, 30, 31 and Jan. 1.