

QC to resume ban on plastic bags, single-use plastics

The Philippine Star · 14 Feb 2021 · 8 · By JANVIC MATEO

The **Quezon City government** will resume the full implementation of the city-wide ban on plastic bags starting March 1. The policy, which was initially implemented in January 2020, was temporarily lifted last May due to the imposition of the enhanced community quarantine in Metro Manila due to the pandemic. Starting July 1, the city government said it will also proceed with the enforcement of another ordinance that bans the distribution of disposable and single-use plastics in restaurants and hotels for dine-in transactions. “There is a pressing need to strengthen the city’s efforts in response to the global movement to reduce plastic wastes,” said **Mayor Joy Belmonte**. “Our call to action is also in fulfillment of the city’s international commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase climate resilience. With the reimplementation of the plastic bag ban, we hope to promote sustainable practices in the city,” she added. Once the plastic ban policy is reimplemented, all shopping malls, supermarkets, fast food chains, drug stores and other retailers in the city are no longer allowed to distribute or provide plastic bags to their customers. The use of brown paper bags in groceries and other retail stores will only be allowed until the end year, with customers required to bring their own reusable bags starting 2022.

On the ban on single-use plastics, restaurants will be prohibited from distributing disposable materials to their dine-in customers, such as plastic spoons, forks and knives; plastic or paper cups; plates; plastic or paper straws; coffee stirrers; and other disposable materials such as Styrofoam. Hotels, on the other hand, are also not allowed to distribute soap, shampoo, shower gels, liquid soap, conditioners and other items used for hygienic purposes in sachets and single-use containers. Restaurants and hotels should also submit their transition plans, including health and safety protocols, to the **Environmental Protection and Waste Management Department (EPWMD)** on or before May 31.

For food delivery and take-away orders, establishments are also encouraged to adopt a “by-request protocol” by asking customers if they need single-use plastic utensils and condiment sachets before providing it to them. Food delivery applications such as Grab Food and Food Panda were also requested to consider incorporating the protocol to positively contribute in the plastic waste reduction program of the city. “We would also like to remind the public that eco bags or reusable bags should be properly disinfected before and after use in groceries and markets,” said EPWMD head Andrea Villaroman. “We are also encouraging the public to use their own eating utensils in their homes and offices as they consume their take away food,” she added.

The city said it will deputize enforcers to check the compliance of establishments to both ordinances.