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## Stringent steps on sale, use of plastic bags planned

Kodaikanal residents to pay a minimum user charge to municipality

Kodaikanal Municipality has planned to initiate stringent measures on sale and use of plastic bags and other materials and collect annual registration fees and monthly deposit from shops selling such items to make hill station plastic-free.

Moreover, residents will have to pay a minimum user charge to the municipality for collecting and disposing of domestic waste.

Those who fail to follow the guidelines in using and selling plastic bags and in disposing of waste safely will be imposed a fine of up to Rs. 7,000.

Establishments and buildings occupying 5,000 square feet or more will have to find their own source to process biodegradable waste and recycle non-biodegradable waste generated by them.

They should not depend on the municipality for disposing of the waste as it will not collect waste from them. If they request, the civic body will collect only non-biodegradable waste fit for recycling.

These guidelines will come into force within one and a half months.

Briefing on plastic and solid waste management programmes here on Monday, Municipal Commissioner S. Saravanan said all shops selling and using plastic bags should register their names with the municipality by remitting Rs. 40,000 per annum and get licence to sell plastic bags.

Besides, each seller would have to pay Rs. 4,000 per month as fees. Such stringent norms would force sellers and users to shift to alternative materials.

All residents would have to segregate waste and hand it over to conservancy workers at the collection point, failing which they would be fined.

Cumulative method would be adopted for fining regular defaulters.

Recycling of non-biodegradable waste would be done by private parties, he added.

Explaining the tax structure, Municipal Health Officer S. Ram Kumar said four slabs of taxes ranging from Rs. 20 to Rs. 200 per month would be levied from residents on the basis of built area.

Hotels with restaurants and other commercial establishments would have to pay Rs. 7,000 for six months.

If they failed to register their names and remit monthly fees, they could be fined and even shops sealed.

To ensure 100% collection of waste, 80 conservancy workers in addition to the existing workers would be hired through private agencies for door-to-door collection, he added.

