

On-the-spot fine of ₹1,000 for spitting in public

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NEW DELHI: Spitting and urinating in public in Delhi will now attract an on-the-spot fine of ₹1,000, double the ₹500 levied before—the south, north and east Delhi municipal corporations, and the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), said in an order issued on Saturday.

The Ministry of Home Affairs had issued fresh directives for Covid-19 management, asking municipal bodies to make spitting “punishable with a fine under Section 51 (b) of the Disaster Management Act” on April 15, four days after it asked all states to prohibit the use and spitting of smokeless tobacco in public to check spread of Sars-Cov-2.

“This directive will remain in force till it is expressly withdrawn,” the notices brought out by the four Delhi municipal agencies said on Saturday.

Dr. Lallan Verma, senior public health expert with the South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC), said, “Urinating in the open is a nuisance whereas public spitting is no less than a big health hazard for all. Even before Coronavirus arrived, open spitting is known to spread various diseases through droplets like tuberculosis, mumps, measles and meningitis,” he added.

Till now, under Section 357 of the Delhi Municipal Corporation Act, sanitary inspectors were empowered to catch anyone spitting in the open and issue on-the-spot fine of ₹100-₹500.

OFFICIALS SAID THAT THOUGH SPITTING IN PUBLIC IS THE MOST COMMON OFFENCE, IT IS ALSO THE ONE THAT IS THE MOST DIFFICULT TO PROSECUTE AS PEOPLE OFTEN FEIGN INNOCENCE

“We would generally see the offender’s profile. For example, if it’s someone spitting out of the window of his car, he would fined ₹500,” said KC Bhardwaj, a sanitary superintendent with the SDMC.

“But now, it’s ₹1,000 for all. In case the violator does not have

money, his/her address will be taken from an ID card. Otherwise, his/her photo will be clicked and details taken on phone. If they don’t agree to this, the challan will be sent to the magistrate for recovery,” said SDMC spokesperson Radha Krishan.

Officials said that though spitting in public is the most common offence, it is also the one that is the most difficult to prosecute.

A senior North Delhi Municipal Corporation officer, who requested anonymity, said, “Catching people who spit in public places is particularly difficult. They spit on even flowerpots installed on roadsides and dividers, and feign innocence. They start asking for proof when we threaten to challan them. So we

are forced to take an educational stance, telling them about the law and the fine. More recently, we have deputed bike-borne teams in markets to catch such people.”

Officials said that with a large section of the population addicted to gutka, spitting is common across the city. The New Delhi Municipal Council had once proposed to put a ban on sale of paan (betel leaf) and Gutkha/supari at Delhi Connaught Place, a heritage shopping arcade, after the freshly painted white walls were stained red by those who spat after eating Paan and Gutka.

The white columns of the market are painted regularly but despite civic agencies placing boards requesting people not to spit, the columns have red stain marks.