

# As BMC intensifies ban on plastics, inspectors seek police protection

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## Mumbai:

As BMC intensifies enforcement of the plastic ban during festival season, civic officials going on inspections have demanded police protection, saying they often face resistance from shopkeepers in many places, especially congested shopping areas where use of plastic materials is rampant.

A BMC official said, “There’s no protection for us, so we avoid visiting many places where we fear retaliation from people or shopkeepers. Last month, there was a meeting with environment minister Ramdas Kadam where we discussed the difficulties we face. But we are yet to get police protection while acting against violators.”

However, when asked about the threat and the demand, a senior official said, “Now, we have increased the number of our visits to act against violators. Till now we have not faced any resistance during inspections.”

Last month, the BMC penalized 556 persons (average 18 in a day) for violating plastic ban. After intensifying their drive this month, the BMC penalised 69 violators on the very first day—November 1.

An official said many shopkeepers have started to use the banned plastic materials again, while several people have been found using it for garbage disposal.

Deputy municipal commissioner Vijay Balamwar said, “We asked three departments—License—Market-Shops & Establishment—to work jointly for more effective implementation of the plastic ban. Number of action has increased during the festive season.” The BMC has deputed 250 inspectors to fan out across the city visiting shops, markets, restaurants and other commercial establishments to implement the ban. These officials have been assigned specific areas and asked to move in groups to ensure no one misuses the power to harass people for bribe.

