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DENR to DILG: Ensure garbage collectors protected from virus

By

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With the first reported case of a garbage collector having been tested positive for the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19), the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is reiterating the need to protect them from the dreaded disease.

The DENR expressed alarm on the case, underscoring the importance of having a clean environment as the country struggles with the pandemic.

Local government units (LGUs) and their garbage contractors, hence, should ensure waste segregation at source, and that the garbage collectors who are vulnerable to the disease are wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) during their operation, the DENR said.

Despite the threat of Covid-19, however, it has been observed that garbage collectors are still unprotected, as they go about their work with not even a face mask, gloves, or even an overall suit or coverall for their protection.

Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu had already asked the help of Interior Secretary Eduardo M. Año.

In his letter-recommendation to Año, Cimatu endorsed seven important measures. These measures are: requiring garbage collectors to wear personal protective equipment; proper segregation of solid waste at source; regular collection of garbage; and, disinfection of garbage bags prior to collection and loading at the garbage truck and upon disposal at the sanitary landfill.

Lastly, Cimatu said no scavenger or unauthorized personnel should be allowed to loiter at the disposal area.

To ensure proper segregation, Cimatu recommended that a color-coding scheme for garbage bags be implemented.

Medical and other health-care wastes including used PPEs, he said, should be placed in the proper storage area prior to collection by the authorized transporter for treatment, he said.

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