



## PMC TO AID IDOL HOME-BASED IMMERSIONS

By Siddharth Gadkari, Pune Mirror | Aug 27, 2016, 02:30 AM IST



***This year, the civic administration has purchased 50 tonnes of ammonium bicarbonate of which 2 kgs will be distributed across households for free***

Starting this year, the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) has taken the decision to introduce an ecofriendly process of disintegrating Ganpati idols during one of the most widely celebrated festivals under its watch. The civic body has decided to provide two kilograms of ammonium bicarbonate for the immersion of Ganesh idols in one's own backyard instead of water tanks or the Mula Mutha river.

The administration has purchased 50 tonnes of bicarbonate for this process and packs of two kgs will be given to households or societies for free. Mayor Prashant Jagtap has appealed to citizens to come and take samples from PMC. He told the media, "We are raising awareness among people to immerse their idols in their own houses. We have made videos that we are putting up on different platforms to let people know the exact process of the immersion. We are also providing free samples of ammonium

bicarbonate in various ward offices."

Suresh Jagtap, head of PMC's solid waste management, said, "Last year, almost 2.95 lakh of idols were immersed in PMC water tanks. We hope that people will respond to the new initiative. Now, we are conducting demos as well as showing video clips to school teachers and students. We are hoping that at least 20 to 30 per cent of the population in the city will take this up."

Residents have mixed reviews about PMC's new initiative. Prashant Sankpal, a resident of Sinhgad Road, said, "We cannot take the decision to immerse the idols in ammonium bicarbonate without seeing the procedure first. But, it is difficult us to immerse the idols at home." Another resident of Sadashiv Peth, Vasant Rao Sathé, said, "We must save our environment and I will definitely use the new procedure."

Nilesh Khaire, a resident of Navi Peth, said, "PMC had initially told us not to immerse the idols in the river. Following this, they appealed to us to use water tanks and now they are asking us to immerse idols at home. We are immersing our idols in water tanks and are happy using this process."

The National Chemical Laboratory (NCL) has completed all the tests to prove that idols dissolve in ammonium bicarbonate water over two days. For dissolving a one kg idol, it requires one kg of ammonium bicarbonate and five litres of water.

With the increase in weight of the idols, the quantity of bicarbonate used will also increase. Anyone can take water in any utensil and add five litres of water and 1 kg of ammonium bicarbonate, stir well and immerse the idol in it. It takes a maximum of two days for the idol to completely dissolve; the residue can be used as a fertiliser later.

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