

Guidelines for celebration of Durga Puja in an Eco- friendly manner

1. General Guidelines for Idol Immersion:

- (i) Idols should be made from natural materials as described in the holy scripts. Use of traditional clay for idol making rather than baked clay, plaster of paris, etc. may be encouraged, allowed and promoted.
- (ii) Painting of Idols should be discouraged. In case idols are to be painted, water soluble and nontoxic natural dyes should be used. Use of toxic and non-biodegradable chemical dyes for painting idols should be strictly prohibited.
- (iii) Uses of Thermo-col or any non biodegradable items for decoration & idol making should strictly be avoided as it leads to exothermic self accelerating decomposition creating environmental pollution.
- (iv) To be used only eco friendly paper plate, banana leaves shell leaves or clay plates for distribution of Prasad.
- (v) Not to use any Music system/Microphones/Drums before 8 Am & after 10 Pm. During the remaining times of day the above items may be played with emitting sound level within the Ambient Air quality standards in respect of noise level as per the provision of the Noise Pollution (Regulation and Control) Rules, 2000.
- (vi) Worship material like flowers, *vastras* (clothes), decorating material (made of paper and plastic) etc. should be removed before immersion of idols. Biodegradable materials should be collected separately for recycling or composting. Non-biodegradable materials should be collected separately for disposal in sanitary landfills. Clothes may be sent to local orphan house(s).
- (vii) Public should be educated on ill effects of immersion in the holy water bodies through mass awareness programme.
- (viii) The *Pooja* organizers be involved in a campaign on the ill effects of the toxic components of coloring materials, not only of the idols, but also other decorating materials used during the festive season. Specific leaflets and poster for mass awareness may be prepared and the *Pooja* committees persuaded to be display such posters and distribute leaflets among worshipers.
- (ix) The 'Idol Immersion Points' shall be cordoned off and barricaded. Synthetic liner may be placed in the bottom, well in advance. The said liner shall be removed on completion of immersion ceremony so that remains of idols would be brought to the bank. Bamboo and wooden logs, if any would be reused. Clay, etc may be taken to sanitary land fill for disposal.

2. General Guidelines for Local Bodies/ Authorities:

- (i) Adequate nos. of designated immersion ghats to be arranged to avoid overcrowding & localization of water pollution.
- (ii) Sufficient nos. of bins/containers are to be provided to avoid littering of food & other wastes etc. These bins or containers wherever placed shall be cleared before they start overflowing. Disposal should be done under the provision of Municipal Solid Waste (Management & Handling) Rules 2000.
- (iii) To keep the vehicle away from Puja Mandap as far as practicable.
- (iv) Utilities such as clean & disinfected drinking water and adequate lighting arrangement should be provided along with CC camera in Puja Pandals/ Mandaps.
- (v) Adequate drainage facilities to be provided in the premises of the Puja Mandap to avoid water logging.
- (vi) If necessary, immersion ceremony may be spreaded over two days to avoid pollution of water bodies & overcrowding.
- (vii) A Co-ordination Committee comprising of District Adm. Officials, Municipal Officials, Police, NGOs, etc. may be set up for guiding the Public & Puja Committees for carrying out immersion with minimum adverse effect to environment.
- (viii) In case of immersion of idols in rivers and lakes, arrangement may be made for construction of temporary confined ponds with earthen bunds for the purpose of immersion of idols. After the completion of immersion, supernatant water may be allowed to flow in river, pond and lake, as the case may be, after checking for colour and turbidity. Lime may be added in temporary confined ponds.
- (ix) Within 48 hours of the immersion of idols, the left over material at idol immersion points on the banks of rivers, ponds, etc. should be collected by the local bodies for disposal as per the provision of the Municipal Solid Wastes (Management & Handling) Rule 2000, so that the final disposal in terms of specific measures under the provision of the above mentioned Rules can prevent contamination of surface water, & ground water .
- (x) At the immersion sites, burning of solid wastes, so generated comprising of used flowers, clothes, decorating materials, etc. should be prohibited.