

No individual meals at public kitchens

The Sharjah municipality has implemented a new rule that forbids public kitchens from serving individual-sized meals to customers. It is being enforced from the first week of February.

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Sharjah: The Sharjah municipality has implemented a new rule that forbids public kitchens from serving individual-sized meals to customers. It is being enforced from the first week of February.

Owners of public kitchens, however, are unhappy with the decision and said they would oppose the ban as it will lead to a loss in business. They have already filed a petition to the Sharjah Executive Council and the Sharjah Consultative Council to revoke the ban.

Sharjah Municipality distributed a circular to 36 public kitchens last Sunday stating that they are no longer allowed to sell individual meals to customers, and can only provide meals in large portions.

Public kitchens offer local dishes in addition to sandwiches and snacks. They are very popular among Emirati families during Ramadan and Eid as they have the choice of bringing in their own plates.

"We make our day-to-day income by selling individual meals and our customers have the choice of either sitting inside the premises or buying a take away meal. We have no choice but to obey the rules but that does not mean we agree with it," said Nasser, a manager of a public kitchen in Al Khan.

"If we can only cater to banquets this will eventually put us out of business."

A senior official at the municipality explained that the decision was made in order to maintain restrictions on the public kitchen's activities. "Public kitchens started acting like cafeteria, and this behaviour does not comply with their activities as stated in their trade licence that were registered with the Department of Economic Development," said Engineer Sultan Al Mualla, Director General of Sharjah Municipality.

Al Mualla said public kitchens should have different functions than cafeterias and restaurants, and there should not be any overlapping between their roles.

"This is the last action we will take against public kitchens and there will not be further amendments. It took us over a year to implement the rule and we already issued warnings

to owners. If anyone is found flouting the rules, their establishments will be closed down."

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