

Malaysians remain indifferent to waste separation

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KUALA LUMPUR (Nov 27): Although waste separation at source became mandatory three years ago, there is still a problem of public apathy, with evidence that just 28% of Kuala Lumpur residents do it.

Federal Territory Solid Waste Management and Public Cleansing Corp (SWCorp) director, Mohd Zahir Shari, said: “The main problem is people’s attitude and throwing rubbish without checking if its food waste or glass.”

Although there is a penalty for violating the Solid Waste and Public Cleansing Management Act 2007 which took effect on June 1, 2016, it seems insufficient to teach the public to sort their rubbish, he told Bernama.

“In Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya alone, with a fine of RM50 for the first offence, we’re able to collect up to RM700,” he added.

He said the Act is in force in Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya, Pahang, Johor, Melaka, Negeri Sembilan, Perlis and Kedah, with waste separation required for paper, plastic, garden waste, bulky waste and other recyclables.

He said if people practiced sorting their trash, there could be waste reduction which would indirectly lessen the need for landfill sites.

So there is definitely a need for programmes to increase awareness on the importance of waste separation to extract material that can be recycled.

According to the SWCorp website, this year the country generated over 38,000 tonnes of garbage per day compared to 14,200 tonnes in 2005.

Nia Hania Rafei, 23, says society is either not taking waste separation seriously or making excuses for not having the time.

“I recycle my newspapers at the weekend and earn money from it,” she said.

Siti Norhawa Mohsin, 39, said it would be nice if there were more recycling stations, especially at shopping complexes, to make recycling more convenient.

Che Ghani Berahim, 50, a maintenance technician, said campaigns need to be stepped up and laws tightened.