



FSSAI to revamp licensing and registration regulations under FSS Act

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FSSAI has decided to revamp the whole licensing and registration regulations under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, which shall focus more on raising the bar for food safety compliance instead of just the documentation by means of licensing and registration.

In the recently-held meeting of the Central Advisory Committee, the apex food regulator of the country, has decided to review the regulations and restructure it in a way that would ensure more compliance from the FBOs. For that, the first thing FSSAI plans to do is recategorise the FBOs according to the annual turnover to lower the bar for entry into the food safety ecosystem.

According to FSSAI's review document, the proposed limit for registration under Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, has been set at Rs 20 lakh, which is currently at Rs 12 lakh, which means now FBOs with a turnover of upto Rs 20 lakh require to only register with FSSAI.

Besides, the regulator has proposed to create three categories of licenses. While Level A (for FBOs whose turnover is between Rs 20 lakh and Rs 5 crore) and Level B (for FBOs whose turnover is between Rs 5 crore and Rs 75 crore) licenses will be issued by the state licensing authorities, the third category (Level C) is for FBOs whose turnover is over Rs 75 crore, and their licenses will be issued by the Central licensing authority.

However, if a food business has premises located in two or more states, it has to apply for a Level C license, irrespective of the turnover under the proposed draft.

Further, entry into licensing and registration has been made easier under the draft, which stated that the registration to be issued on the basis of self-declaration without inspection. For low-risk category, the license would be issued after the submission of documents, while for high-risk category, the issuance of license is subject to inspection along with documentation.

Registrations will be issued for a period of five years and licenses for three years.

Further, draft proposal pushes for the simplification of the kinds of businesses as well, with seven categories, including manufacturing [which covers general food

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business operators (FBOs), milk, meat, fish and food supplements]. The other kinds include storage, transport, trade, retail (both general and e-commerce), food services (both general and e-commerce) and imports.

The focus of FSSAI has been for some time to increase the level of compliance and awareness about the requisites under the regulations with regards of food safety ecosystem. It has also been come to the notice of the regulator that despite having registration or license, FBOs often lack even in the basic subjects, like sanitation and hygiene.

In the meeting, it has been decided that the FSSAI headquarters shall be responsible for ensuring the compliance through a direct monitoring system on real-time basis, as all other FBOs' premises will be linked with the head office for the purpose.

The document added that inspection shall take place once a year by the authority or third party. It also spoke about the transition. The proposal has stated that new licenses and registration will be issued to the FBOs for the remaining period of validity without any fees.