

## **Coronavirus: FSSAI says food import clearances and testing labs operations are essential services**

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The Food Safety and Standards Authority (FSSAI) on Tuesday said it has classified clearances for imported products and functioning of notified food testing laboratories under the Essential Services during the Covid-19 outbreak.

The food safety authority said that all personnel who have been assigned the charge of above essential services are required to be available in office, “on all working days from Monday to Friday between 9:30 am to 6 pm to facilitate the trade and ensure smoother operations of related services across the country.” The Food Safety authority said that notified food testing laboratories include National Food Labs. It currently has offices at six locations in Chennai, Kolkata, Mumbai, Delhi, Cochin and Tuticorin.

### **Keeping close watch**

“All these offices are fully operational for scrutiny of applications, visual inspection and sampling for import clearance to ensure expeditious processing of applications and timely issuance of No-Objection Certificates. Therefore, all importers are advised to inform their clearing agents accordingly,” it stated.

Food importers who are facing any problems can write to the FSSAI for further clarification.”FSSAI is keeping a close watch on the situation. It will continue to assist food importers as well as ensure regular supervision and testing of food items and will take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of food products,” it added in a statement.