

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on Food Recall Procedures

1. What is Food Recall?

Food Recall means the action to remove food from the market at any stage of the food chain, including that possessed by consumers.

2. For what kind of food products recall is initiated?

The food products that are determined or prima facie considered unsafe & identified as a potential threat to the public health or violate the Act, or the rules or regulations made thereunder may be recalled.

Note-According to Regulation 5(7) of FSS(Food Recall Procedure) Regulations 2017, a recall of imported food may be initiated based on reports from health and food authorities or information received from them. The Food Business operator shall on receiving such directions from the authorities as above, must promptly initiate the recall following the prescribed procedures under these regulations.

3. Why Food Recall is required?

Food recalls are an appropriate method for removing or correcting marketed food products and their labelling that violate the laws administered by the regulatory authority. Recall of food product is in largely in the interest of consumers. The food recall also serves the interest of the industry and the government. Recalls afford equal consumer protection but generally are more efficient and timely than formal administrative or civil actions, especially when the product has been widely distributed.

4. What are the objectives of Food Recall procedures?

- a) Ensure removal of food under recall from all stages of the food chain in accordance with section 28 of the Act;
- b) Ensure dissemination of information to concerned consumers and customers; and
- c) Ensure retrieval, destruction or reprocessing of food under recall.

5. Who can initiate Food Recall?

Manufacturers and/or distributors should initiate a recall at any time to fulfil their responsibility to protect the public health from products that present a risk of injury or gross deception, or are otherwise defective.

Firms may also initiate a recall following notification of a problem by Food Authority or a state agency or any other regulatory body governing food commodities under government, in response to a formal request by the aforementioned authority, or as ordered by these Authority.

6. What are the different scenarios in which Food Recall is initiated?

- a) At any stage in the food chain if it is determined by the FBO that food may pose a threat by the virtue of its being unsafe or contravening provisions under the FSS Act and rules/regulations made there under;
- b) The recall process shall also be initiated as a result of reports or complaints referred to the food business operator from any stakeholder and if food business operator determines that there are a need to recall.
- c) As a result of analysis report for the surveillance or regulatory samples drawn by the enforcement authority, being declared unsafe or in contravention of the provisions under the act & regulations and may have serious implications to public health. The concerned authority may direct the FBOs to initiate recall to which compliance is mandatory.

Note-In an event if the FBO is aware that the food manufactured or stored for selling/distribution is unsafe or contravening the provisions stipulated under the act and regulations made there under, such implicated product shall not be released in the market in any case. Food recall is the measure to retrieve the already released food commodities which later on have been detected through testing or any other means as non compliant with the extant law and likely to pose health risk, thereby preventing the chances of affecting public health.

7. What is a food Recall Plan?

“Food recall plan” means the procedures and arrangements that a food business operator shall have in place to retrieve food and food products from any stage in the food chain if a problem arises. All food business operators engaged in the **manufacture or importation or wholesale supply of food** regulated under the Act must have an up-to-date recall plan.

Note- Exemption-

- Food businesses in the food service sector such as restaurants, caterers and takeaway joints are exempted from having a recall plan unless they are running multi-outlet food business chains with integrated manufacturing and distribution network.
- The food retailers are not required to have a food recall plan, unless they are also engaged in the manufacture or importation or wholesale supply of food.

8. What is a Recall Alert?

Any alert issued to the public by the **Food Business Operator** under intimation to Chief Executive Officer, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India and the concerned Commissioner(s) of Food Safety of the State(s) or by the Food authority or Commissioner of States/UTs about the food under recall.

9. What is the responsibility or role of Food Business Operators w.r.t. Food Recall?

- The food business operator shall have procedures and systems in place to identify the food businesses to which they have supplied their food.

- The food business operator shall collaborate with the Commissioner of Food Safety of the State or Union territory or the Food Authority on action taken to avoid or reduce risks posed by the specific batch or lot or code of food, which they supply or have supplied.
- The food business operator shall remove the food from sale or distribution, when requested by the Commissioner of Food Safety of the State or Union territory or the Food Authority, as the case may be.

10. In what manner a ‘Food Recall Notice or alert’ may be released by the FBO?

The food business operator shall promptly inform the consumers in the affected area of the food recall through press release, letters to the concerned parties or advertisements in the media and such press release, letter or advertisement shall be in the form of ‘Food Recall Notice’ and shall contain the following information, namely:-

- Name of the Food Business Operator recalling the food;
- Name of the food, brand name, pack size, batch and code number, date of manufacture, used by date or best before date;
- The contamination or violation in the food or reason for such recall;
- “do not consume message”;
- Health warning and action;
- The places or outlets where the food is found;
- The action to be taken by the consumer;
- Contact number for queries.

Note-The FBO must:

- complete the press release **within two hours after being notified of the recall**
- submit a draft of the proposed Press Release, if required, to the concerned Authority for approval
- arrange for translation of the press release for concerned region

11. Is it mandatory to inform the Food authority (CEO, FSSAI) for the update in the progress and status of the recall?

Yes, the food business operator should determine whether the recall is progressing effectively and submit periodic status reports to the concerned Commissioner, Food Safety, State/UT & Designated Officer, concerned district and CEO, FSSAI to inform the progress of the recall. FBO shall submit the periodic recall status report. The FBO must;

- verify that all accounts have stopped distributing and selling the recalled product(s)
- verify that the recalled product(s) have been returned to the FBO responsible for the recall.

The recall status report shall contain the information as specified in Schedule-II of FSS (Recall Procedure) Regulations, 2017 to the authority.

12. What will be the fate of recalled products?

The product is to be recovered to a central site, or in the case of widely distributed product, to major recovery sites.

- ***In violation of labelling or any other requirement under the act/regulations but fit for human consumption:*** may correct or re-process the recovered food, if permitted by Chief Executive Officer, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India.
- ***The recalled product is so deteriorated or unfit for human consumption-*** the food business operator shall ensure disposal of such food in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India. A complete record of the disposal of such product shall be maintained.
- ***Foods imported into India which are recalled products in other markets or where Indian made foods are subject to recall or rejection in country of export and returned to India,-*** Food Authority or the Commissioner of Food Safety of the State or Union territory shall, in consultation with the concerned food business operator, determine the fate of such products for disposal or reprocessing at port or otherwise and shall review recall plan for the exported foods and advise the health authorities in the importing countries about such recall.

13. If a consumer have purchased the product and is recalled by the FBO, what will be the next step for him/her?

The consumer should not consume the affected products and may return the product to the retailer or the point from where the product was purchased. The consumer may call the respective hotlines provided by the FBO in the recall alert notice for more enquiries about the recalled product or get in touch with the concerned district FDA officials. If the recalled product is consumed and have concerns about their health should seek medical advice.

14. What are the indicators to measure by the FBO, to ensure that Food Recall is done successfully?

The FSS (Recall Procedure) Regulations, 2017 outlines the procedure and regulatory requirements to complete a food recall in interest of public health. Further for a more comprehensive understanding of the process; GUIDELINES FOR FOOD RECALL has been released which describes step by step process of initiating recall till its culmination along with the method & proforma in which information and development regarding the recall is to be shared with the CEO, FSSAI & Commissioner Food Safety, States/UTs. The guidelines categorically delineate the roles/responsibilities of FBO in management and communication to mitigate the food safety risk associated. It also provide overview of how to develop a recall plan and how to implement that plan in the event of a recall. It will assist in identifying products which are unsafe or violate the requirements under the Act, or the rules or regulations made thereunder and enable recall of the product(s) from the market

place. The same may be find at link: [Guidelines Food Recall 28 11 2017.pdf \(fssai.gov.in\)](#).