

Press Release

FSSAI ensures uninterrupted food business operations during the COVID-19

New Delhi, April 23, 2020: The outbreak of COVID-19 has not only posed a threat to lives but also affected the world's economy – supply chains, businesses and jobs. In response to this pandemic, the Food Safety & Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is taking several steps to ensure un-interrupted food services/supply as well as industry facilitation during the lockdown period.

While food safety is our paramount concern, FSSAI appreciates the need to facilitate food businesses to function in these trying times when the supply chains are badly affected. Key steps have taken by FSSAI in the COVID lockdown period.

Import clearances of food items and food testing laboratories (National Food Labs at NCR and Kolkata and FSSAI accredited private laboratories) have been classified as Essential Services during the COVID-19. To facilitate faster clearance, sampling is being allowed at Kochi International Container Trans-shipment Terminal itself rather than at CFS.

Provisional clearance for the consignments of imported crude oils (edible grade) and food grains has been allowed till 30th May, 2020. Provision has been made to receive online applications and fee for review of rejected food import cases.

To ensure the consistent supply of Food for Special Medical Purposes i.e., food for Inborn Errors of Metabolism (IEM) conditions and hypoallergenic conditions, FSSAI has extended the permission for their import for a further period of 6 months till 01st Nov, 2020 through Delhi and Mumbai ports.

FSSAI has allowed FBOs, in logistic supply chains, other than manufacturers, to temporarily operate their businesses on the basis of a valid receipt of FSSAI license/ registration application having 17-digit Application Reference Number (ARN) generated on Food Licensing and Registration System (FLRS). Only in case of high risk cases, inspection by way of e-inspections will be done to prevent delay in processing of applications.

Licenses requiring renewal during 22nd March to 31st May 2020 have been allowed a penalty waiver and grace period till 30th June 2020.

The returns to be filed by food businesses have been deferred till 31st July 2020.

Modification fee for FBO's has been reduced from one year license fee to Rs 1,000 only.

A guidance note titled *"Food Hygiene and Safety Guidelines for Food Businesses during Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Pandemic"* has been released that covers best practices/ guidelines to be followed by food handlers to maintain high standards of personal hygiene, safe food practices, implementation of GHP and GMP practices as per Schedule 4 of FSS Act as well as ensuring necessary protocols of social distancing. The guidance note is available at www.fssai.gov.in.

FSSAI has also initiated through its flagship FoSTaC program, an online training module for food handlers on the essentials of food safety and hygiene practices during COVID-19 through its empanelled training partners

FSSAI is also using various communication tools to disseminate necessary information regarding COVID-19 in the interest of public. Two posts, in Hindi and English from the official handle of FSSAI incorporating key messages of food safety, personal hygiene practices, healthy eating habits, social distancing and other valuable tips for citizens is taken out on various social media platforms.

FSSAI has collaborated with MyGov platform to disseminate key messages in the form of small videos of 30/40 seconds with endorsement from various experts in the field of food safety and nutrition including doctors, nutritionists, dieticians, chefs as well as Sports personnel. Similar collaboration is also being carried out with UNICEF, India.

FSSAI has also created a COVID-19 specific page on their website that incorporates various communication collaterals, guidance notes and press releases along with important notifications, directions and orders released by FSSAI during this period.

Food safety officials in most States are also engaged in active COVID duty ensuring lockdown besides doing surveys/surveillance; inspections of working food businesses / community kitchens and coordination for food supplies.

FSSAI appreciates the service being rendered by the front line workers – COVID warriors and that of the silent backend support workers in essential and support services. Employees of FSSAI have contributed Rs 7.41 Lakhs towards the PM Care Fund.

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