

# For ease of doing biz, century-old Boilers Act to be decriminalized

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- **The two-year jail provision to be dropped; govt likely to ease 60 more compliances.**

The government is set to decriminalize the archaic Boilers Act, 1923, which lays down rules for the operation of steam boilers, to improve the ease of doing business in India.

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) is also likely to ease 60 compliances related to the legislation besides decriminalizing three provisions of the Act, removing the provision for a two-year jail time for violation of the rules.

The proposed changes will affect several industries, including power, automobiles, textiles, breweries and distilleries.

It is part of the government's reform initiative to improve the ease of doing business in the country and reduce litigation.

Boiler is an essential tool for a number of industries including power plants, government factories, sugar, textile, feed, auto rice mills and the pharmaceutical industry. "We will soon be decriminalizing Boilers Act, 1923. The jail provision will be dropped for three sections of the Act. Around 30 compliances have already been reduced under the boiler regulation," a commerce ministry official said.

"Boiler inspectors almost never give us certificates without a bribe. If you self-certify, there will be targeted harassment. There are fixed prices for it in Jharkhand. The current rate to get a boiler inspector to approve a 6-tonne boiler is ₹15,000. The bribe goes up according to the boiler capacity," said a chemical factory in charge who did not want to be named.

In an earlier interview, DPIIT secretary Anurag Jain said that the department was examining some business-related offences under ease of doing business 2.0 besides extending the duration of licences and cutting the frequency of inspections.

Queries emailed to the ministry of commerce and industry spokesperson remained unanswered till press time.

States and the Centre have done away with more than 25,000 compliances, and an additional 3,000 compliances are under review for reduction this year.

Over the last few years, the government has decriminalized as many as 103 offences and removed 327 redundant provisions and laws to reduce the industry's compliance burden.