

FBOs directed to keep oil records if consumption over 50 litre per day

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FSSAI has issued an order directing food business operators (FBOs) to maintain records of edible oils used by them if their consumption exceeds 50 litre per day.

The step is being taken to avoid the repeat use of cooking oil beyond permissible limit and ensure food safety. Further, the country's apex food regulator, through this order, wants to ensure the safe disposal of such used oil.

The order stated that to ensure that such used cooking oil neither re-enters the food chain nor is directly used in the food production, it was decided that all FBOs whose consumption of edible oil for frying was over 50 litre per day shall maintain records and dispose of used cooking oil to agencies authorised by FSSAI or state food safety commissioners.

"The repeated use of cooking oil produces harmful chemicals called total polar compounds (TPCs), which deform the chemical composition of the edible oil, thereby making it unsafe for cooking or frying. However, it has been noticed that in most of the cases, cooking oil is used repeatedly, and even mixed with the new oil, which is not a safe practice," said a senior FSSAI official.

FBOs have to maintain records of the type of oil, the quantity taken for frying, the quantity discarded at the end of the day, the date, the mode of disposal of used cooking oil, and the name of the agency which has collected the discarded oil.

It was also clearly stated in the order that the cooking oil having developed TPC of over 25 per cent shall not be topped up with fresh oil. This order shall commence on March 1, 2019, and the state machinery has been asked to initiate enforcement in this regard.

Offering an insight into the significance of the development, Ashwin Bhadri, chief executive officer, Equinox Labs, said, "During frying, new compounds are formed due to the joint action of high temperature and the presence of air and moisture."

"The most abundant compounds formed possess higher polarity than their parent

triacylglycerols (TG) and low volatility. These compounds formed are harmful for human consumption and should be avoided,” he added.

“The regulation that FSSAI has passed is an imperative one and justifies each and every point that has been drafted. FBOs will now be cautioned on the use of cooking oil and will be under the purview of food safety authorities by maintaining records timely. The consumers will be at the best benefit from this regulation, as they will be safeguarded from the ill-effects of used cooking oil,” Bhadri stated.

“Despite India being a vast and diverse country, it has now become cautious of the prevalent food safety practices,” he pointed out.

The food industry has evolved over the years, and implemented all the regulations laid down by FSSAI diligently.

“The importance of the new amendment will be reaching out to all the states across the country and will be under the purview of respected designated officers of the state. I strongly believe that this amendment will make a difference and will be followed by each and every responsible FBO,” he said.