

India: Food Safety Auditing with great care

SS Rana & Co

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The rapidly growing economy of India has seen a massive development in various arenas of the commercial sector. Being an agro-based nation, vast improvement has been seen in the food industry. Being a vital aspect for life and survival, the aspect of safety and standards regarding the quality of the same are required to be monitored with great care and caution.

Regulation of Food Safety

In order to monitor the commercialization of the food and its products in India, the Government enforced the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 (hereinafter referred to as the “Act”). The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (hereinafter referred to as “FSSAI”) is the authority for regulating food laws in India. FSSAI is responsible for laying down science-based standards for articles of food and to regulate their manufacture, storage, distribution, sale and import, to ensure availability of safe and wholesome food for human consumption and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

Auditing of Food Safety

With a view to ensure compliance to the Act, FSSAI and the regulations issued therefrom, The Government has introduced the Food Safety and Standards (Food Safety Auditing) Regulations, 2018 (hereinafter referred to as “Food Safety Auditing Regulations”) on August 28, 2018. The Food Safety Auditing Regulations provide a legal framework for recognition of Auditing Agencies, procedure for renewal/cancellation/suspension of recognition, terms and conditions of recognition, auditing procedure, duties of auditors, audit reporting and audit monitoring system.

The process of auditing shall involve classification of the category of food business requiring mandatory screening, ensure compliance to prescribed safety standards, inspection of newly established food business unit, maintain confidentiality in respect of commercial-in-confidence materials, conduct necessary follow ups to confirm adoption of corrective procedures by the food business operators, etc.

In order to keep a strict watch on the activities of the food business operators, the FSSAI has brought forward the Food Safety Auditing Regulations to check that such corporates abide by the requisite standards of food safety thereby safeguarding the interest of the consumers.