

FSSAI does not allow use of formalin for fish preservation

July 18, 2018 in [Goa News](#)

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Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, the autonomous body looking after food safety and regulations in the country, does not allow formaldehyde or formalin to be used as preservatives on fresh fish and fish products.

The Food Safety and Standard (Food Products Standard and Food Additives) Regulation 2011 issued by the Union ministry of health and family welfare does not include formaldehyde under the list of food additives and preservatives for use in any food products.

The notification, which is available on the FSSAI website, says the quantity of the additive added to fish shall be limited to the lowest possible level necessary to accomplish its desired effect.

The limit is set between 30mg/kg to 100mg/kg.

The food regulator allows the use of only potassium bisulphate, potassium sulphite, sodium metabisulphate, sodium sulphite, all are referred as sulphur dioxide, to be used as preservatives on selected fish products like frozen shrimps, lobster and fish fillets, salted fish, frozen finfish, canned finfish, canned shrimps, canned sardines, canned tuna, bonito and crab meat.

The regulation also allows the manufacturers or producers of fish products to use antioxidants like ascorbic acid and also permit acidification which is another means of preserving fish and fish products by using citric acid and acetic acid in such quantity that the pH is not below 5.

However, there is no mention of formaldehydes or its other most commonly known names such as methanal, methylene

oxide, oxymethylene, methyl aldehyde, oxomethane, formic aldehyde, formol, fannofom, lysoform, morbidic acid, superlysoform and trioxane in the Food Safety and Standard (Food Products Standard and Food Additives) Regulation 2011.

Moisture retention agents are also allowed to be used singly or in combination.

This notification clearly makes things clear that the formaldehyde is not permitted by the FSSAI or any other government agency in the country to be used as a preservative for fish and fish products.