

## Thiruvananthapuram: Hoteliers ‘no’ to ID cards for workers

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Impossible to get permanent handlers.



Kerala Commissionerate of Food Safety

**Thiruvananthapuram:** The ambitious Subhojanam Scheme, which is being rolled out by the City Corporation aiming at ensuring hygiene at eateries, has faced a set back with the Hotels and Restaurants Association cold-shouldering the decision to mandate ID cards for workers. According to the hotel owners, it's impossible to get permanent food handlers and workers at eateries. Also the association claimed that the scheme clashed with the programmes of Kerala Commissionerate Food Safety (KCFS).

It is learnt that the Commissionerate has launched FoSTaC (Food Safety Training and Certification) as mandated by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) for ensuring a trained food safety supervisor trained in good hygiene and manufacturing at every eatery in the state.

The corporation's plan is to launch the scheme this week. However, according to sources, there would be a slight delay in the launch of the programme because of the floods.

The Kerala Hotel and Restaurants Association district secretary B Vijayakumar told DC that the scheme of the corporation is highly impractical. "It's impossible to get permanent workers. Majority of them are migrant workers and they stick on only for short term and they move to other places. It's hard to get permanent workers and to always make the ID card for them," said Mr Vijayakumar. He said that the training programme of the Commissionerate is easier and practical to implement. "The corporation is planning to set up lab facility for checking food and water quality which is designated responsibility of the food safety," Mr Vijayakumar added.

With the hotel owners' cold-shouldering the decision, the civic body has decided to enforce ID cards for food handlers and hotel employees. "Every eatery including thattukadas would be brought under the scheme. Hotels should hire only certified food handlers and workers and else we would take action," said the official.

The official said the food safety is understaffed and they don't have the infrastructure to ensure food safety.

"They have one officer to cover an entire constituency. But we have the human resources and infrastructure to implement the scheme," the official added.