

## **FSSAI plans to expand notified entry points for food imports**

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Move will facilitate ease of doing business, ensure safety of products imported

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) plans to increase the number of notified entry points for food imports in the country. This is being done as part of its efforts to facilitate ease of doing business while ensuring the safety of the food products imported into India.

“In order to put in place a robust food regulatory framework at the point of entries to prevent entry of unsafe or sub-standard food into the country, it is proposed to notify 132 Points of Entries.....covering seaport, airports, ICD (Inland Container Depot), LCS (Land Customs Stations) and SEZs as food import entry points,” a notice outlining the proposal said. These entry points are spread across the country. Currently, FSSAI has notified Authorised Officers at 416 locations to regulate import of food items. Of this, while 20 locations are supervised by FSSAI officials, 396 locations are manned by Customs officials.

The food safety authority said it is making efforts to expand the notified entry points to ensure various regions from where major food imports are done, get covered. The 132 locations have been identified, “based on the food imports data of past years received from DGCI&S and CBIC,” it added. FSSAI has now sought stakeholder comments for the proposal.

The food safety authority had in 2017, notified the Food Safety and Standards (Import) Regulations to streamline the process of clearance of imported food products. Notified food import points of entries are locations where the regulator has appointed authorised officers to facilitate the imports clearance process.

According to the regulations, “the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India shall notify the officers for the purpose of food import clearance to ensure compliance of the provisions of the Act, and it may also notify officers from other government agencies to maintain the standard operating procedure for food import clearance.”

Authorised officers are tasked with receiving applications for food import clearance, drawing samples for testing, forwarding the samples to notified laboratories and issuing a non-objection certificate or non-conformance report to the food importer, among others.