

FSSAI direction on salt samples as cos fear harassment over iodine content

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FSSAI has issued a direction regarding sampling of salt. The apex food regulator came up with the direction following representations from salt manufacturers over exemption sought to enforcement of upper level of iodine content in iodised and iron fortified iodised salt and concerns over harassment of FBOs in cases of non-compliance of stray samples.

The new direction regarding 'sampling plan for salt,' issued recently, has been for the enforcement of Food Safety and Standards (Food Fortification) Regulations, 2018, which came into force in July this year.

"The concerns were put before the scientific panel wherein it was recommended that guidelines should be framed on sampling and enforcement of salt samples. Accordingly, a sampling plan for salt was framed to be used by the Food Safety Officers for analysing salt samples," said Dr Shobhit Jain, Executive Director, Compliance Strategy, FSSAI.

Highlighting the FBOs' point of view, Dr Bindu Maurya, Quality Manager at NBHC Pvt Ltd, Mumbai, said, "Basically, the upper limit needs a guideline. If someone is using potassium iodide without any proper guidelines, we won't know how much amount is the proper amount - the higher limit or lower limit has to be decided then it will be good for the Indian market. We can see there is overuse of salt in junk food these days so with the right guidelines will help further in controlling the same."

Meanwhile, according to FSSAI the sampling plan is only for production/bulk storage area wherein a single sample for laboratory analysis shall be minimum of 500g and without moisture. Samples should be kept in a bottle preferably of amber colour to avoid deterioration of iodine due to sunlight.

The general guidelines further say the FSO will be solely responsible for the samples drawn for the purpose of analysis. FSO has also given the right to choose to draw a sample from production line or stacked area.

The guidelines also describe the mathematical formula for determination of sample size, sampling interval besides detailing the preparation of laboratory sample. Every drawn sample will have four parts, of which one can be sent to a desired lab by the FBO, says the guidelines.