



FSSAI launches special drive against FBOs holding wrong or invalid licence

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Though only 33 lakh out of five crore Food Business Operators in the country obtained a licence or secured registration by 2016, FSSAI has found that many of the FBOs are holding a licence or registration that is wrong or invalid.

In this regard, FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India) has launched a special drive by sending letters to Food Safety Commissioners of all states and Union territories, Directors and Central Licensing Authorities, Regional Offices, FSSAI, and Additional Commissioner, Food Safety cum EDH(G), Indian Railways, asking them to address four types of non-compliances - FBOs who have obtained registration certificate despite being required to obtain a licence; FBOs continuing food business with expired licence/without licence; FBOs who have obtained fresh licence/registration instead of renewing the previous one to avoid penalty; and FBOs manufacturing/processing food products which are not endorsed on their licence.

The letter pointed out that the drive will be carried out in two phases. In the first phase, FBOs shall be provided a facility on the FSSAI website to enable them to check their eligibility, status of licence, and in the second phase, enforcement activities will be taken up against the defaulting FBOs under the Act, Rules and Regulations.

Elaborating on the letter, Chandrakant Pawar, Joint Commissioner, FDA Maharashtra, said, "This special drive is to ensure that all FBOs follow the rules and regulations accordingly as stated by FSSAI."

He added, "FBOs whose annual income is more than Rs 12 lakh for them licensing and registration is mandatory."

With regard to the poor numbers in obtaining licence or registration, a shining example is the 100% literate state Kerala, which has achieved just 60% licensing and registration.

Shiv Kumar, Deputy Commissioner, Food Safety, Kerala, explained, "It is a difficult task to

achieve 100% licensing and registration all over India as street food vendors and hawkers do not come for licensing."

He added, "Unless there is a special drive by FSSAI which includes external agencies doing surveys it's impossible to achieve as we have limited FSOs."