

The Statesman

From 1 April, liquor bottles to carry ‘don’t drink & drive’ label

The new regulation is called the Food Safety and Standards (Alcoholic Beverages Standards) Regulation, 2018, and will hold for distilled alcoholic beverages (brandy, country liquor, gin, rum, vodka and whiskey, liqueur or alcoholic cordial), wines, and beer.

Statesman News Service | New Delhi | March 28, 2019 9:49 am



FSSAI has issued notification under Food Safety and Standards Act 2006 regarding statutory warning on label of alcoholic beverages. (Photo: Getty Images)

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has issued an order that all liquor bottles from 1 April, 2019 should contain prominent statutory warnings, asking consumers to not drink and drive and outlining how alcohol consumption is harmful for health.

The nodal agency, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), has issued a notification under Section 16(5) of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 regarding statutory warning on label of alcoholic beverages.

The decision was taken after a directive of the Delhi High Court. Social activist Prince Singhal, founder Community against drunken driving (CADD), had filed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in this regard.

Singhal said: “I had filed a PIL in 2017 in the Delhi High Court on having a statutory warning on don’t drink and drive on alcohol bottles. I applaud the directives of the Court as after 19 years of diligently working towards community awareness and legislative reforms, we have been able to bring a tangible change in the country which would be a turning point in the direction of bringing down road fatalities. Several countries across the world that have adopted such warnings including USA, Kenya, South Africa, Thailand, Zimbabwe, Taiwan, Mexico, Turkey and have been able to bring down drunk driving tragedies, as not only does it allow consumers to make an informed choice but it also reiterates on the need to practice no drinking and driving policy.”

For alcoholic beverage bottles up to 200 ml, the letters on the label, all in capitals, should not be less than 1.5 mm high; bottles larger than 200 ml will have letters 3mm tall. The apex food regulator had given a year’s time to the food business operators to make the shift, and comply with the regulations that kick in from 1 April, 2019.

The new regulation is called the Food Safety and Standards (Alcoholic Beverages Standards) Regulation, 2018, and will hold for distilled alcoholic beverages (brandy, country liquor, gin, rum, vodka and whiskey, liqueur or alcoholic cordial), wines, and beer.

Apart from the warning, the specific labeling requirements will also need a declaration about alcohol content, allergen warning, no nutritional data, no health claim, restriction on words such as 'non-intoxicating' or words implying similar meaning on the label of beverage containing more than 0.5 percent alcohol by volume.