

FSSAI asks food biz to comply with new packaging norms by July 1

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Photo: AFP

New Delhi: Food businesses need to comply with new packaging regulations that bar use of recycled plastics and newspapers to wrap food articles by July 1, regulator **FSSAI** said on Thursday.

The new regulations prohibit packaging material made of recycled plastics including carry bags for packaging, storing, carrying or dispensing articles of food.

Taking cognizance of the carcinogenic effect of inks and dyes, the norms also prohibit the use of newspaper and such other materials for packing or wrapping of food articles and includes respective Indian standard for printing inks for use on food packages.

“The new packaging regulations would raise the bar of food safety in India to the next level,” **Food Safety and Standards Authority (FSSAI)** CEO Pawan Agarwal said in a statement.

He also said that there would be “difficulties” in implementation of these regulations by the unorganised sector and therefore sufficient time has been given before the regulations come into force.

“The food businesses shall have to comply with these regulations by 1st July, 2019,” he said.

Agarwal also mentioned that stakeholder’s consultation and mass awareness building amongst consumers and food businesses would precede implementation of the new packaging regulations.

Besides general and specific requirement with respect to packaging materials, the FSSAI said new regulations also prescribe overall migration and specific migration limits of contaminants for plastic packaging materials.

The regulations specify the suggestive list of packaging materials for different food product categories.

As per these regulations, packaging materials used for packing or storing the food products should conform to the Indian standards provided in the schedules.

The new norms will replace all provisions with respect to packaging requirements prescribed in the Food Safety and Standards (Packaging and Labelling) Regulations, 2011.

Recognising the importance of packaging in the food sector and its impact on food safety, packaging regulations have been separated from labelling regulations.

The primary objective of packaging is to protect the food contents from micro-biological, chemical, physical and atmospheric contamination and preserve the food and thereby protect consumer’s health.

Good packaging also ensures that there is no change in sensory properties or composition of food when packed. Packaging is essential and critical for promoting food safety, extended shelf-life and thereby enhancing food security.