

All-inclusive food pkg stds to prohibit used plastic, recycled material

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Comprehensive all-inclusive standards, which will be out soon, are all set to prohibit used plastic of any type as well as recycled material for the purpose of packaging food. FSSAI is currently completing the process of notifying the new standards, which will also mention norms for packaging materials other than plastic - glass, paper and cardboard, metal and metal alloys.

The apex food regulator, in the new standards, shall be incorporating the BIS (Bureau of Indian Standards) norms for packaging as well. After gazette notification, these will be mandatory for FBOs to follow. These were voluntary until now. The regulations will also prescribe the migration limits of various contaminants. This will offer the FBOs an insight into how to deal with food packaging.

Pawan Agarwal, CEO, FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India), while confirming that the standards would be out soon, stated that along with the standards a survey conducted by the Indian Institute of Packaging shall be released. This will help reveal the present scenario of food packaging in the country.

Meanwhile, according to senior FSSAI officials, the proposed standards shall not deviate much from the draft released by the apex food regulator last year.

“There shall be strict call for using ‘virgin plastic’ for any kind of food packaging and reused plastic shall be banned for any use for food packaging,” explained a senior official privy to the development.

The official stated that earlier the standards were not for every kind of packaging material and they were only for plastic but now along with plastic, the FSSAI has incorporated other packaging material like glass, paper and cardboard, metal and metal alloys.

“There were BIS standards for these packaging materials but now we have taken them under our purview so that they become mandatory,” the official said while adding that BIS standards were voluntary but after coming under FSS Act, these standards will be mandatory for the FBOs to follow and there shall not be lacklustre approach with respect to food packaging.

Besides packaging material, these standards will also define the migration of the

contaminants when food comes in contact with the printed packaging material or other such material used for packaging. These regulations shall have specific migration limits to specific contaminants, like heavy metals.

“For ink we have referred to the BIS standards. This includes a negative list of chemicals used in inks for packaging material, which was not part of the earlier regulations on packaging material for food,” the official stated.

Also, in these regulations FSSAI has given a list of suggestive packaging material to be used for specific food products like milk and its products but only in accordance to the standards.

It is pertinent to mention here that the draft regulations on packaging make mandatory compliance with the relevant BIS norm for paper and board materials, metals and alloys, and plastic materials in Schedules I, II, and III, respectively.