

Food businesses need to conduct mandatory product testing twice a year

Thursday, 22 July, 2021

Ashwani Maindola, New Delhi

The FSSAI has stated that food businesses need to conduct the mandatory product testing twice in a financial year on a half yearly basis wherein the gap between the two mandatory testings should not be less than 3 months.

These ‘mandatory testings’ should be done from April to September and October to March twice in a fiscal year.

The country’s food regulator has issued a ‘clarification’ regarding the frequency of mandatory product testing under condition of licence as per the Food Safety and Standards (Licensing and Registration of Food Businesses) Regulations, 2011.

The FSSAI has added that the decision was taken to align with the online submission of the Annual Returns by the FBOs.

“In order to align mandatory testing with the submission of online Annual Return which is Financial Year-wise, it is clarified that testing of food products as per the ‘condition number 12’ of the FSS (Licensing and Registration of Food Businesses) Regulations, 2011, shall be carried out by manufacturers on basis of financial year i.e. first half year from April to September and second half year from October to March,” reads the order.

The ‘Condition No. 12’ under the licensing & registration rules says, “Ensure testing of relevant chemical and/or microbiological contaminants in food products in accordance with these regulations as frequently as required on the basis of historical data and risk assessment to ensure production and delivery of safe food through own or NABL accredited/FSSAI notified labs at least once in six months.”

Food businesses sought clarification from the food regulator about the timeline of the said condition. They asked the FSSAI to clarify whether the periodicity was ‘calendar-wise’ or ‘fiscal year-wise.’

Meanwhile, the FSSAI also clarified that those food business operators who got their new licence issued in the last months of respective half year, i.e. in the month of September and March, shall be exempted from mandatory testing for that preceding and ending half year period.