

FSSAI's hygiene rating scheme for FBOs technology-enabled, user-driven

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Our Bureau, New Delhi

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India's (FSSAI) Hygiene Rating Scheme is a user-driven, technology-enabled scheme applicable to food businesses supplying food directly to consumers either on or off the premise, as informed by the country's apex food regulator.

Food businesses are rated on the basis of food hygiene and safety conditions found at the time of inspection, and are given a score between one and five, as per their hygiene and food safety compliance. This scheme has been recently introduced for the food service sector such as hotels, restaurants, cafeterias, etc.

The main purpose of this scheme is to:

- Allow consumers to make an informed food choice about where to eat and inculcate the right eating habits
- Encourage food businesses to adopt high hygiene standards and to sustain them, so as to showcase the same to their consumers

In addition, there is already a regulation namely the Food Safety and Standards (Licencing and Registration of Food Businesses), Regulations, 2011, to check the reuse of cooking oil by the caterers.

In the said regulation, the following guidelines are provided:

- The reuse of cooking oil should be avoided
- In case of reheating of oil, use maximum three times to avoid the formation of trans-fat. It is ideal to use once, if possible
- The reheating and reuse of oil should be avoided as far as possible. Avoid using leftover oil wherever possible. However, vegetable oil, having developed more than 25 per cent total polar compounds (TPCs), shall not be used

Further, on August 10, 2018, FSSAI launched a new initiative, Repurpose Used Cooking Oil, which is an ecosystem that will enable the collection and conversion of used cooking oil to bio-diesel.

The regulator issued directions on January 30, 2019 requiring food business operators (FBOs), whose consumption of edible oils for frying is more than 50 litre per day, to maintain usage records and dispose the used cooking oil to authorized aggregators for being

delivered to bio-diesel manufacturers.

Detailed guidelines have also been issued for handling and disposal of used cooking oil by FBOs to ensure safe handling and disposal of used cooking oil.

This was stated by Ashwani Kumar Choubey, minister of state for health and family welfare, in a written reply in the Lok Sabha here recently.