

Press Release

FSSAI issue directions for facilitating food businesses during the prevailing COVID-19 conditions

New Delhi, April 20, 2021: To facilitate the continuity of food business operations during the prevailing COVID-19 outbreak, the Food Safety & Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has taken immediate steps to ensure uninterrupted food services/supply during the current scenario.

FSSAI has reiterated and clarified that Import clearances of food items and testing services by FSSAI's notified laboratories (including both public and private laboratories) are Essential Services.

Directions, with immediate effect have been issued to:

1. Allow FBOs, other than manufacturers, to temporarily operate their businesses on the basis of a valid receipt of FSSAI license/ registration application having 17- digit Application Reference Number (ARN) generated upon online application and fee payment on FoSCoS. This will enable quick expansion of logistic supply chains, warehouses, retail outlets, catering, food service establishments etc wherever required. New businesses can start operating once they successfully file a complete application on FOSCOs. This is an interim relief measure, the licence/ registration will need to be secured before the expiry of the relaxation.
2. Manufacturers are allowed to increase/ enhance their capacity, on the basis of a valid receipt of FSSAI license/ registration application having 17- digit Application Reference Number (ARN) generated upon online application and fee payment on FoSCoS. This will enable immediate upscaling of production facilities without waiting for regulatory approvals.
3. No routine inspections are required to be done except in case of high risk food product viz. Milk and milk products, slaughter houses, meat and meat products etc. However, food safety authorities can conduct inspections in case of select cases on basis of risk profiling or in case of any food emergency/ incidents and complaints. Where feasible, inspections can be done by e-inspection.
4. The deadline for returns for 2020-21 has been extended till 30th, June 2021. All returns are required to be filed online on FOSCOs.
5. No penalty shall be payable for late filing of application for renewal of licenses.

These measures are until and shall cease w.e.f. 30.06.2021 irrespective of the status of lockdown/ curfew/ containment at any location. More details are available at www.fssai.gov.in

FSSAI has written to all States to ensure no disruption of food supply chains and that regulatory compliance requirements are not an impediment for operation of any food business.

FSSAI's through its flagship training programme FOSTAC is providing trainings to food business operators on covid appropriate practices in food industry. Till date more than 2.5 lakh food handlers have already been trained, free of cost. The initiative needs to be promoted to ensure covid appropriate behaviour in the food industry. Details are available on www.fostac.fssai.gov.in

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