

Transforming India Food Safety & Nutrition System

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"It has been pointed out by some laboratories that they are finding it difficult to obtain necessary movement passes for their staff and as a result, their functioning is being adversely affected. I would therefore like to request Chief Secretaries to kindly instruct local administration to issue necessary movement passes to the staff of the FSSAI recognised private food labs in your state as per their request so that these labs can function during the lockdown." **Mr G S G Ayyangar, CEO FSSAI P 21**

Editors Note:

The times are challenging as we continue to face the unprecedented threat of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, hopes are alive. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has urged that we need to ensure protection of lives as well as livelihood of all as we move forward. With this the Government machinery has resumed work from mid-April. FSSAI has opened its offices and its officials have facilitated seamless work operations following standard operating procedures of social distancing and hygiene practices.

Key steps have taken by FSSAI in the COVID lockdown period. Import clearances of food items and food testing laboratories (National Food Labs at NCR and Kolkata and FSSAI accredited private laboratories) have been classified as Essential Services during the COVID-19. Recognizing the urgent requirement for the food industry to strengthen food safety and hygiene at their premises during COVID-19, FSSAI has initiated an online training module for food handlers, with the support of empanelled training partners under the umbrella of FoStAC program.... **P 3**

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EDITOR NOTE

Dear Readers,

The times are challenging as we continue to face the unprecedented threat of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, hopes are alive. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has urged that we need to ensure protection of lives as well as livelihood of all as we move forward. With this the Government machinery has resumed work from mid-April. FSSAI has opened its offices and its officials have facilitated seamless work operations following standard operating procedures of social distancing and hygiene practices.

FSSAI has clarified that there is no conclusive evidence of any food borne transmission of Corona virus. A guidance note titled *“Food Hygiene and Safety Guidelines for Food Businesses during Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Pandemic”* has also been issued by FSSAI.

Recognizing the urgent requirement for the food industry to strengthen food safety and hygiene at their premises during COVID-19, FSSAI has initiated an online training module for food handlers, with the support of empanelled training partners under the umbrella of FoSTaC program. While food safety is our paramount concern, FSSAI appreciates the need to facilitate food businesses to function in these trying times when the supply chains are badly affected. Key steps have taken by FSSAI in the COVID lockdown period.

Import clearances of food items and food testing laboratories (National Food Labs at NCR and Kolkata and FSSAI accredited private laboratories) have been classified as Essential Services during the COVID-19.

Provisional clearance for the consignments of imported crude oils (edible grade) and food grains has been allowed till 30th May, 2020. Provision has been made to receive online applications and fee for review of rejected food import cases.

Apart from innovating core operations, FSSAI is also using various communication tools to disseminate necessary information regarding COVID-19 in the interest of public. We are extensively utilizing our online mediums including facebook, twitter and website for disseminating key messages of food safety and personal hygiene practices, healthy eating habits, social distancing and other valuable tips for the citizens to deal with this pandemic situation. We are also thankful to the endorsement received from experts (in the form of small video tips) in diverse fields including doctors, nutritionists, dieticians, as well as chefs, celebrities & other personalities for joining hands together to support the cause and influence citizens. These videos are made available on the MYGov platform for mass dissemination to the citizens.

FSSAI appreciates the service being rendered by the front line workers - COVID warriors and that of the silent backend support workers in essential and support services. We also appreciate all our employees of FSSAI for contributing Rs 7.41 Lakhs towards the PM Care Fund.

On behalf of FSSAI, I thank you, our patrons and supporters. Please do go through this issue to know more about our key activities and keep sharing your valuable suggestions.

We are all hopeful that the situation gets normal sooner!

Warmly,

Inoshi Sharma, Director SBCD
Food Safety & Standards Authority of India
directorfssai@gmail.com

I. Core Regulatory Functions

I.1 Compliance & Enforcement:

I.1.1 Orders Issued

In view of corona virus spread FSSAI has released following orders in the month of April 2020 for relaxation during COVID-19 pandemic

- Regarding grace Period for applying for renewal of license / registration expired / expiring during the period from 22nd March to 31st May 2020 during the COVID pandemic

An order was issued dated 13th April 2020 that allowed FBOs, whose FSSAI license/registration expired/ expiring since 01st August 2019 till 30th June 2020 to continue their food businesses with their exiting license/registration number without any late fee.

More details are available at <https://fssai.gov.in/cms/covidrc.php>

- Regarding Extension of timeline for submission of Annual / Half-yearly Returns by licensed Manufacturers / Processors and Importers

An order/letter was issued dated 11th April 2020 as per clause 2.1.13 and Conditions of License in Annexure 3 of Schedule 2 of the FSSA (Licensing and Registration of Food Businesses) Regulations, 2011 which ensures, that all licensed Food Business Operators (FBOs) involved in manufacturing/processing including Relabellers/Repackers and Importers are required to submit annual return of their food businesses. Considering the difficulties faced by FBOs in submission of annual/half yearly returns during lockdown, it has been decided to extend the timeline for submission of annual return for FY2019-2020 and half yearly return for October, 2019 - March, 2020 till 31st July 2020.

More details are available at <https://fssai.gov.in/cms/covidrc.php>

- Modification fee for FBOs has been reduced from one year license fee to Rs 1,000 only
- Limited dispensation in select cases are also being given from certain compliances to enable food businesses to work with limited resources and ensure uninterrupted mass production and supply of food

1.2 Standards:

FSSAI has leveraged technology and is holding scientific panel meetings and other such consultative meetings through video conference so that the regular work of standards formulation continues uninterrupted

1.3 Food Imports:

I.3.1 Directions Issued

- i. Directions under Section 16(5) of Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 uploaded on 16th April 2020 regarding extension of Provision of Provisional NOC (P-NOC)

A direction was issued by FSSAI dated 16th April 2020 regarding the facility of provisional clearance for the consignments of imported crude oils (edible grade) and food grains has been allowed till 30th May, 2020. To facilitate the same, the importer shall declare and submit the undertaking/declaration in a particular format to the concerned Authorized Officers for carrying out a visual inspection on the same day (without any delay) and issuance of a Provisional NOC (P-NOC) upon satisfactory inspection.

More details are available on: <https://fssai.gov.in/cms/covidimport.php>

- ii. Provision enabled for receiving online applications and fee for review of rejected food import cases.
- iii. To ensure the consistent supply of Food for Special Medical Purposes i.e., food for Inborn Errors of Metabolism (IEM) conditions and hypoallergenic conditions, FSSAI has extended the permission for their import for a further period of 6 months till 01st Nov, 2020 through Delhi and Mumbai ports.

- iv. Import Clearance and Food Testing Labs classified as Essential Services by FSSAI during the COVID-19

Food Safety & Standards Authority (FSSAI) has classified the import clearance of food items and functioning of notified food testing laboratories (including National Food Labs) under The decision was taken to enable import clearances and also food testing laboratories (including FSSAI accredited private laboratories) to function in the lockdown period. Essential Services during the COVID-19. In a press release issued by FSSAI dated 31st March 2020, all personnel who are assigned the charge of above essential services are required to be available in office on all working days from Monday to Friday between 9:30 AM to 6:00 PM in order to facilitate the trade as well as ensure smoother operation of related services across the country. More details are available at:

https://www.fssai.gov.in/upload/press_release/2020/03/5e833bf076bab_Press_Release_Import_Lab_Service_31_03_2020.pdf

I.4 Foods Testing Services:

1.4.1 Communication regarding regular testing of food items during COVID-19

- i. A letter was issued to the Chief Secretaries of States/ UTs to ensure the regular testing of food items to ensure food safety during this critical time of COVID pandemic. To enable faster testing, FSSAI has recognized a large number of private laboratories (in addition to laboratories in public sector) to meet the requirements of food industry. These laboratories are functional during the lockdown period and attend samples not only from the industry but also enforcement samples from the Food Safety Officers of State Government.

More details are available on: <https://fssai.gov.in/cms/covidimport.php>

II. Transforming Food Environment

II.1 Third Party Audits & Hygiene Ratings

Eat Right Campus Certification

1. **Nestle India Limited, Goa with 5 Star rating**
2. **Nirma University, Gujarat with 4 Star rating**
3. **Gujarat Forensic Science University with 4 Star rating**
4. **Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Ahmedabad with 5 Star rating**
5. **National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM) with 4 Star rating**

II.2. Training & Capacity Building

II.2.1 Webinars

A webinar was organized on Hygiene and Sanitation Practices for Food Businesses amid COVID-19. Since the world is facing an unprecedented threat from COVID-19 pandemic, there is an urgent requirement for the food industry to strengthen food hygiene and sanitation practices in order to protect food handlers and consumers from the spread of the Corona Virus. The webinar showed participation from over 400 people from diverse fields across the country and was well organized to handle queries from the food businesses, chefs, community kitchens, catering units and associated colleges.

II.2.2 Trainings

To enable the industry and public to cope with the challenges of maintaining safe food supplies in the COVID19 pandemic situation FSSAI has initiated through its flagship FOSTAC program, a training module for food handlers on the essentials of food safety and hygiene practices during COVID-19. Besides above,

regular e-trainings on many aspects of food safety are being carried out by FSSAI's International Training Center ITCFSAN.

II.2.3 Capacity Building of Food Testing Laboratories.

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) under its capacity building initiative is regularly strengthening the scientific and technical staff working in State/UTs , FSSAI Notified Laboratories through various basic and specialized training programs. In the month of April, 2020 due to COVID-19 outbreak online training programs were organized by FSSAI and ITC-FSAN, Mumbai to utilize the lock down period. Total 91 online training programs has been organized till 30 April, 2020 for all the laboratory personnel of State/UTs ,FSSAI Notified laboratories, other laboratories, FBO's and consumers. Total 25,570 participants attended the training programs

III. Mass Mobilization

III.1 Guidance Notes

A Guidance note on Food Hygiene and Safety Guidelines for Food Businesses during Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Pandemic was released by FSSAI dated 15.4.2020 (in Hindi and English language).

The document covers best practices/guidelines to be followed by food handlers for maintaining high standards of personal hygiene, safe food practices, implementation of GHP and GMP practices laid in Schedule 4 of FSS Act as well as ensuring necessary protocols of social distancing.



More Details are available at:

https://fssai.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/Guidance_Note_COVID_15_04_2020.pdf

III.2 Campaigns during COVID-19:

III.2.1 Messaging through Online Mediums:

i. Messaging via Social Media Channels

FSSAI is using its social media extensively to help guide communities with an appropriate course of action during this public health crisis. One tweet, in both Hindi & English language, is posted every day from the official handle of FSSAI by way of an informatory creative/ poster incorporating key messages of food

safety and personal hygiene practices, healthy eating habits, social distancing and other valuable tips for citizens to deal with this pandemic situation.

More posters are available on <https://fssai.gov.in/cms/coronavirus.php>

POSTERS (also available in Hindi and other regional languages):

- ❖ [Keep Food Safe in times of Social Distancing](#)  size:(0.11 MB)
- ❖ [Responsibility of Food Business Owner / Manager during COVID - 19](#)  size:(0.17 MB)
- ❖ [Personal Hygiene of Food Handlers](#)  size:(0.18 MB)
- ❖ [To implement social distancing, food businesses should](#)  size:(0.16 MB)
- ❖ [Cleaning and Sanitation Requirements for Food Business Operators \(FBOs\)](#)  size:(0.17 MB)
- ❖ [Cleaning in Food Premises during COVID - 19](#)  size:(0.14 MB)
- ❖ [7 BaatonmeinAapkaSaath](#)  size:(0.15 MB)
- ❖ [7 Baatonmein se ekBaat: Take special care of the elders in your home, especially those who have any chronic diseases](#)  size:(0.09 MB)
- ❖ [7 Baaton Mein Se EkBaat: Practive social distancing, and use homemade face cover or mask](#)  size:(0.1 MB)
- ❖ [7 Baaton Mein Se EkBaat: To increase your immunity, follow the instructions given by the Ministry of Ayush](#)  size:(0.09 MB)
- ❖ [7 Baaton Mein Se EkBaat: Take care of as many poor families as you can. Meet their food requirements.](#)  size:(0.09 MB)
- ❖ [7 Baaton Mein Se EkBaat: Respect the Corona Warriors of the country](#)  size:(0.08 MB)
- ❖ [Social Distancing during COVID-19](#)  size:(0.11 MB)
- ❖ [To ensure food safety, food handlers must remember to wash their hands](#)  size:(0.15 MB)
- ❖ [FSSAI recommends the AarogyaSetu App in our fight against COVID-19](#)  size:(0.11 MB)
- ❖ [When in doubt, throw it out!](#)  size:(0.11 MB)
- ❖ [Save Water Irrigate the plants at your home with used kitchen water](#)  size:(0.12 MB)
- ❖ [Avoid cross contamination in your food business](#)  size:(0.11 MB)
- ❖ [World Health Day](#)  size:(0.11 MB)
- ❖ [Serve Food Safety](#)  size:(0.13 MB)
- ❖ [5 things you can do help fight COVID-19](#)  size:(0.13 MB)
- ❖ [Serve Safe during COVID-19: Use digital payment methods instead of cash as a precautionary measure against COVID-19](#)  size:(0.11 MB)
- ❖ [Save Water: Pre-rinse plates and other dishes in a utensil of water instead of running tap water](#)  size:(0.13 MB)
- ❖ [Spread Facts, Not Fear regarding Myth: It is not safe to receive a food package from any area where COVID-19 has been reported](#)  size:(0.12 MB)
- ❖ [Keep Food Safety in mind while buying essential items during COVID-19 regarding wash of fruits, vegetables](#)  size:(0.11 MB)
- ❖ [Spread Facts, Not Fear regarding Myth: COVID-19 is airborne](#)  size:(0.12 MB)
- ❖ [Keep Food Safety in mind while buying essential items during COVID-19 regarding shopping bags](#)  size:(0.12 MB)

- ❖ [Spread Facts, Not Fear regarding Myth: Hand dryers are effective in killing COVID-19](#) 📄 size:(0.11 MB)
- ❖ [Spread Facts, Not Fear regarding Germs can spread from your hands to things you touch](#) 📄 size:(0.13 MB)
- ❖ [How to stay healthy during the coronavirus lockdown](#) 📄 size:(0.12 MB)
- ❖ [Avoid handing food if you are ill](#) 📄 size:(0.08 MB)
- ❖ [Refrigerate leftover Food immediately](#) 📄 size:(0.13 MB)
- ❖ [Wash raw vegetables thoroughly to remove all visible dirt](#) 📄 size:(0.12 MB)
- ❖ [Ensure safe cooking practices at home](#) 📄 size:(0.11 MB)
- ❖ [Maintain Food Safety during COVID-19](#) 📄 size:(0.1 MB)
- ❖ [Keep Food Safety in mind while storing food](#) 📄 size:(0.1 MB)
- ❖ [Keep your gadgets \(phones, laptops, mouse, etc\) clean when you Work from Home](#) 📄 size:(0.09 MB)
- ❖ [To avoid the transmission of COVID-19 Food Businesses must](#) 📄 size:(0.12 MB)
- ❖ [Take precautions while grocery shopping during COVID-19](#) 📄 size:(0.13 MB)
- ❖ [Food Handlers must practice Hand Washing](#) 📄 size:(0.11 MB)

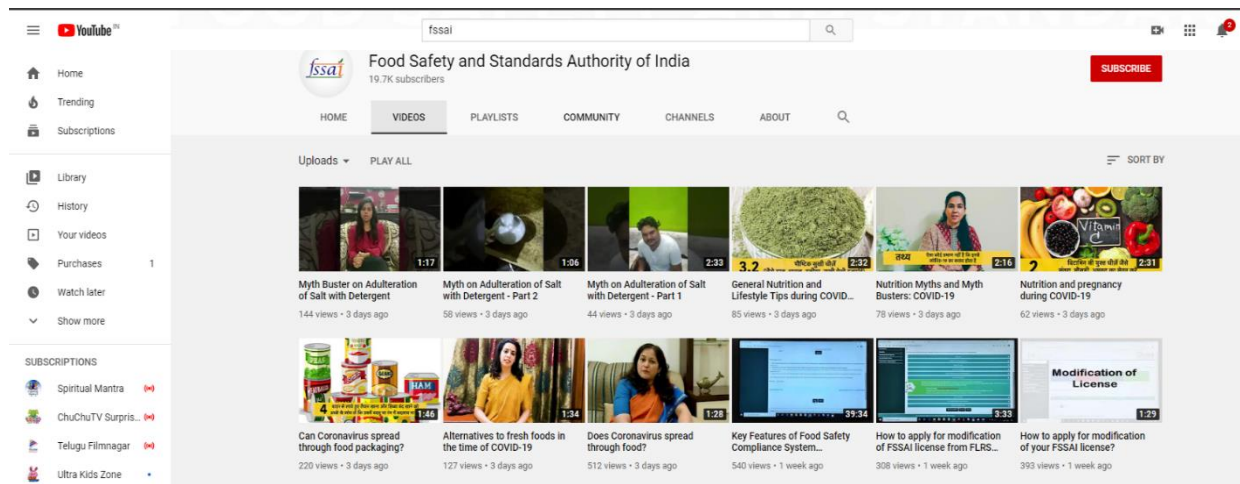


ii. Expert Videos

FSSAI is constantly raising awareness amongst citizens by creating ‘Expert Speak’ videos on various important issues related to COVID-19. FSSAI has collaborated with NCEARD, Lady Irwin College & UNICEF India for production of these videos by utilizing our NetProFaN experts all over the country.

VIDEOS (also available in English and other regional languages):

- ❖ [Does Coronavirus spread through food?](#)
- ❖ [Alternatives to fresh foods in the time of COVID-19](#)
- ❖ [Can Coronavirus spread through food packaging?](#)
- ❖ [Nutrition and pregnancy during COVID-19](#)
- ❖ [Nutrition Myths and Myth Busters: COVID-19](#)
- ❖ [General Nutrition and Lifestyle Tips during COVID-19](#)



iii. Celebrity Messages:

FSSAI is also coordinating with influencers from the field of Cinema, Olympics and Sports for joining hands together to support the cause and influence citizens. These celebrities are reaching out to mass audience with small videos of 30/40 seconds on various topics during this lockdown so that netizens can follow these tips and ensure their health, hygiene, nutrition and overall well-being.

iv. COVID-19 specific page on the website:

FSSAI has also created a COVID-19 specific page on their website that incorporates various communication collaterals, guidance notes and press releases along with important notifications, directions and order released by FSSAI during this period for easy accessibility by anyone.

III.3 Collaboration/ Partnerships:

III.3.1 Collaboration with MyGov Platform

FSSAI has collaborated with MyGov platform to disseminate key messages in the form of small videos of 30/40 seconds with endorsement from various experts in the field of food safety and nutrition. These videos are made

available on the MYGov platform as well as their social media channels for mass dissemination to the citizens.

III.3.2 Collaboration with UNICEF India

For the production of expert speak videos, FSSAI has collaborated with NCEARD, Lady Irwin College & UNICEF India for production of these videos by utilizing our NeTProFaN experts all over the country. These videos are also made available in other regional languages for mass dissemination. The audio versions will be utilized for dissemination via internet radio with support of All India Radio

Issues in Details

In The News

“FOCUS ON PREVENTING SPREAD OF COVID-19 DURING FOOD BUSINESS OPERATIONS”

By Ashwani Maindola | Friday, 17 April, 2020

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has issued food hygiene and safety guidelines for food businesses to follow in their operations under the prevailing situation due to Covid-19 pandemic.

FSSAI in a statement said that although, there is currently no evidence that food is a likely source or route of transmission for Covid-19 virus, however it is important to take all precautions to prevent any possibility of person to person spread of Covid-19 infection during food business operations.

In this regard, FSSAI has developed a detailed guidance on specific measures that can be taken by various types of food businesses in addition to those specified in the Schedule IV of Food Safety and Standards (Licensing and Registration of Food Businesses) Regulations 2011, to prevent spread of Covid-19 during such food business operations.

These specific measures, include maintaining high levels of personal hygiene; excluding Covid-19 infected persons from the operations; practicing social distancing; and appropriate cleaning/sanitisation of the food operations' premises and food contact materials. The document is primarily intended for all types of food businesses including food service, transport and retail operations.

The guidance has been developed based on the best practices currently recognised and adopted internationally.

The guidance note also says that it is mandatory for all food businesses to implement Good Hygiene Practices (GHP) and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) specified in Schedule IV of Food Safety and Standards (Licensing and Registration of Food Businesses) Regulations, 2011, and it will be the responsibility of the food business owner/ manager.

The guidance note also lays guidelines for Covid-19 screening protocol to screen the personnel entering in the premises and imparting of the information regarding Covid-19 pandemic amongst workers. The note makes provision for close monitoring of the employees or food handlers and urges large establishments to

ensure making of a local emergency response team to deal with suspected infections.

The guidelines also asked the FBOs to depute one person as Covid-19 coordinator.

“These measures are primarily aimed at ensuring safe, clean and wholesome food which is indispensable to the health and welfare of consumers. Nevertheless, Covid-19 situation demands implementation of some additional focussed measures mainly to prevent human-to- human spread of the disease in food business operations and also to reduce the likelihood of contamination of various materials in contact with food such as equipment, packaging materials etc.,” the note issued by FSSAI stated.

“DEHRADUN ADMIN CONDUCTS TRAINING SESSION FOR FOOD DELIVERY AGENTS”

By TNN | Saturday, 18 April, 2020

DEHRADUN: District administration, along with Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), conducted a training session for the delivery agents working for online food delivery platforms like Swiggy, Zomato, and Dominos on Friday. The officials said that training was imparted to over 170 delivery agents



by the members of the planning team, a part of district’s Covid-19 team. There were a maximum of 50 people in each batch for the training that was imparted to ensure that social distancing norms are being followed while delivering food.

The training comes in the wake of a 19-year-old delivery agent being tested positive for coronavirus in New Delhi. More than 70 families have been kept under quarantine in the national capital after the young delivery agent tested positive for the virus.

Dr Anuj Dimri, who led the training session, told TOI, “The training session is significant for people involved in outdoor duties during times of Covid-19 outbreak. The session was especially designed for the delivery agents as they constantly travel to different places to deliver food supplies. Apart from explaining them the importance of undergoing thermal scanning, the candidates were also informed about safety procedures and the symptoms of the coronavirus and ways to maintain personal hygiene”.

The planning team has also trained the staff at hotels, which have been converted

into quarantine centres, and the employees of various government departments – police, Jal Santhan, Uttarakhand Power Corporation Limited, and others – which are actively working in times of a pandemic, the official added.

Ganesh Kandwal, district food safety officer at FSSAI, told TOI “The training will make a huge difference in our fight against coronavirus. Apart from the delivery agents, the people working at community kitchens, which are serving food to over 2,500 people every day, have also been trained. The key reasons behind organising these training sessions are – ensuring compliance of Food Safety Acts, safety of direct food handlers, and the safety people receiving supplies from the delivery agents.”

“FASTER CLEARANCES, EASED NORMS TO ENSURE UNINTERRUPTED FOOD SUPPLY: FSSAI”

By PTI | Thursday, 23 April, 2020

IN RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, THE FOOD SAFETY AND STANDARDS AUTHORITY OF INDIA (FSSAI) SAID IT IS TAKING SEVERAL STEPS TO ENSURE UNINTERRUPTED FOOD SERVICES/SUPPLY AS WELL AS INDUSTRY FACILITATION DURING THE LOCKDOWN PERIOD.



The regulator said that provision has been made to receive online applications and fee for review of rejected food import cases.

Food regulator FSSAI on Thursday said it has taken various measures, such as faster clearance of imported food products, to ensure uninterrupted supply of essential items during the ongoing lockdown. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) said it is taking several steps to ensure uninterrupted food services/supply as well as industry facilitation during the lockdown period.

FSSAI said while food safety is its paramount concern, there is a need to facilitate food businesses to function in these trying times when the supply chains are badly affected. Listing out various steps taken by it, FSSAI said import clearances of food items and food testing laboratories (National Food Labs at NCR and Kolkata, and FSSAI accredited private laboratories) have been classified as essential services during the COVID-19 lockdown.

“To facilitate faster clearance, sampling is being allowed at Kochi International Container Trans-shipment Terminal itself...,” it said in a statement. It has allowed provisional clearance for the consignments of imported crude oils (edible grade) and foodgrains till May.

The regulator said that provision has been made to receive online applications and fee for review of rejected food import cases. To ensure the consistent supply of food for special medical purposes, that is food for Inborn Errors of Metabolism (IEM) conditions and hypoallergenic conditions, FSSAI has extended the permission for their import for a further period of six months till November 1, 2020 through Delhi and Mumbai ports.

FSSAI has allowed food business operators (FBOs) in logistic supply chains, 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 on the Food Licensing and Registration System (FLRS).

Only in high risk cases, e-inspections will be done to prevent delay in processing of applications. Licences requiring renewal during March 22 to May 31, 2020 have been allowed a penalty waiver and grace period till June 30, 2020.

The returns to be filed by food businesses have been deferred till July 31, 2020. Modification fee for FBOs has been reduced from one year license fee to Rs 1,000 only, it said. That apart, FSSAI has recently released a guidance note titled 'Food Hygiene and Safety Guidelines for Food Businesses during Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Pandemic'.

FSSAI has initiated through its flagship FoSTaC program, an online training module for food handlers on the essentials of food safety and hygiene practices during COVID-19 through its empanelled training partners. FSSAI is using various communication tools to disseminate necessary information regarding COVID-19 in public interest, the statement said.



“HYGIENE AND SANITATION PRACTICES FOR FOOD BUSINESS AMID COVID-19”

By Swaminathan| Thursday, 30 April, 2020

The spread of SARS-CoV-2 Coronavirus, the disruptive pandemic causing virus can be controlled by simple, yet highly effective practices if followed in a robust and rigorous manner.

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has released the guidance document “**Food Hygiene and Safety Guidelines for Food Businesses (FBO) during Coronavirus disease (Covid-19) Pandemic**”. This code of practice is in addition to Schedule IV requirements for GMP, GHP practices. Also, it is expected that ‘Aarogya setu’ app is downloaded and used.



Coronavirus is transferred through droplets during coughing from a Covid-19 positive person. When these droplets fall on the surface and these surfaces are further touched by hands (and then further touched to mouth, eyes) the spread happens. The virus survival period is dependent on the surface it falls. Example: On Cardboard, it is 24 hrs, whereas on plastic it last for 24-48 hrs and on wood, it is nearly 5 days.

FSSAI has recommended the following to be followed at all times by FBO.

1. Personnel Monitoring: All personnel entering in the facility including visitors to be monitored at the entry, during the work, and exit for the Covid-19 symptoms. This includes

- Thermal Screening (the body temp. must be below 99 0 F)
- Cough (especially dry)
- Breathing difficulties/shortness of breath
- Fatigue
- Muscle pain

Keeping the relevant monitoring data is essential to demonstrate compliance.

2. **Social / Physical distancing** of 1 meter (appx. 3 ft): This is required while performing any operations or activities including home delivery. The recommendation is 3-4 persons in area of 10 sq. ft. FBO can work reversely by adjusting shifts or production lines, reducing the labour, or restricting the number of customers in the retail to follow this requirement.

3. **Personal Hygiene:** Maintaining high standard of personal hygiene is critical for the FBO. This includes

a) **Good Respiratory Hygiene:** Mask/face cover prevents the spread of droplets during the cough. The choice of the mask can be dependent on the area hygiene standards and the risk of the product. The mask needs to be replaced after a maximum 6 hours of use. The disposal of the mask (and other PPE) is to be done like medical waste, in dedicated waste bins. If the mask was worn by the suspect or the person in the clinical activities, it needs to be decontaminated before trash. These masks can be put in a separate bag before throwing in the waste bins.

b) **Hand Washing:** This includes hand wash with water and soap for a min of 20 sec (as per WHO guidelines). The sanitation practices with 70% alcohol-based sanitizers or equivalent to be followed. This is also required for a customer to sanitize his hands at the entry and exit of food retail premises. Remember that cleaning is not substituted by sanitation and sanitation is not substituted by wearing gloves.

c) **Illness Reporting:** Encourage your team to report the symptoms or other illnesses. Measures like to stay at home, quarantine, isolation needs to be taken based on symptoms shown by suspects. There is a stigma attached to the disease. Be Empathetic as there will be concerns for salary, job security. Give a message that “Covid-19” is a curable disease.

4. **Cleaning and Sanitation:** Cleaning-Sanitation and/or Disinfection-Drying are the activities that will prevent the spread of the coronavirus. Although FSSAI has given examples of high touchpoints, it is essential that the FBO does its own risk identification of identifying “High touchpoints” and decide the measures. Toilet, Washrooms are considered as high-risk areas. The steps are further elaborated as follows. a. **Cleaning:** All the areas of food establishment will have deep cleaning with soap and water. It must be remembered that in the presence of dirt and soil, the effectiveness of sanitizers and disinfectants decreases significantly. Hot water (60 0 C) is recommended to be used for cleaning of equipment, utensils, cutlery, etc

b. **Sanitation / Disinfection:** While both sanitizers and disinfectants kill the “germs”, disinfectants are more powerful than the former. It kills the microbes to the negative log of 5 while sanitizers kill to the negative log of 4. The contact time required by disinfectant ranges from 10 – 60 min depending upon the active ingredient it has. FSSAI has recommended the use of hypochlorite solutions from 0.1% (1000 ppm) to 1% (10,000 ppm) or quaternary ammonium compound depending upon the area. Note that this concentration is for surface disinfection and should not be confused with the food. There are other families of disinfectants that are approved by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to be effective against human coronavirus. E..g: Hydrogen Peroxide, Peroxyacetic acid, etc. FSSAI also gives guidance on use of 70% alcohol sanitizers to be used for metallic surfaces. The use of e-wallets is highly preferred.

c. **Drying:** Preferably air drying.

5. Emergency Procedures: FBO is expected to form an Emergency team with an Emergency Coordinator. The procedure will have names for the nearest authorized testing & treatment hospitals, contact details of the disinfection agency. It is expected that certain stock of disinfectant & PPE will always be available for emergency situations.

6 Procedures for Suspects and positive detected persons: The guidelines additionally cover the steps to be taken if a person is identified as a suspect. The information to the authorities on the full measures taken and the protocol followed is essential for the FBO. Covid-19 recovered person can come back to the work when there are no symptoms of fever (without medicine for 72 hrs) and COVID-19 test is negative for at least 2 times.

It must be noted that the guidelines/code of practices are based on the current situation and will be revised based on further information/notification that will come from time to time from various government authorities.

FOSTAC program on Hygiene and Sanitation practices by FBO amid Covid-19 is available and being delivered by approved Training Partners. It is expected that the FBO and their suppliers have undergone the course. Taking preventive measures to the utmost is the need of the hour. Let's get comfortable with uncomfortable till the new uncomfortable becomes comfortable.

In The News

Fn**B**news.com

“FSSAI WRITES TO CHIEF SECRETARIES TO ALLOW FOOD LABS TO FUNCTION IN LOCKDOWN”

By Ashwani Maindola| Wednesday, 29 April, 2020

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has written to the state Chief Secretaries to allow food laboratories including private labs certified by the apex food regulator, to function during the lockdown.

FSSAI CEO Dr G S G Ayyangar in the letter has urged the state governments to provide necessary passes to the workforce of the labs so that they can operate uninterruptedly during such trying time.

“It has been pointed out by some laboratories that they are finding it difficult to obtain necessary movement passes for their staff and as a result, their functioning is being adversely affected. I would therefore like to request you to kindly instruct local administration to issue necessary movement passes to the staff of the FSSAI recognised private food labs in your state as per their request so that these labs can function during the lockdown,” reads the letter written by the CEO to the state Chief Secretaries.

FSSAI has recognised many private food laboratories in addition to the government labs to meet the requirement of the food industry. There are presently 182 notified primary labs across India, 18 referral laboratories and 12 national reference laboratories.




The apex food regulator says that these labs need to function even during the lockdown period as they attend to samples not only from the industry but also enforcement samples from the food safety officers of the state governments.



But due to the lockdown the working of the private labs has impacted severely, as local administration was not allowing passes to the staff.

It is pertinent to mention here that many high risk category food businesses, as per the condition of the licence, are required to test their products periodically. Besides, in some industries like dairy, FSSAI has mandated a scheme of testing and inspection which requires testing by labs on a regular basis at various stages of processing. These tests are required to be conducted in NABL-accredited FSSAI notified labs only.

Press Releases

PRESS RELEASE || COVID-19

- Press Release dated 23rd April 2020 related to FSSAI ensures uninterrupted food business operations during the COVID-19. (Uploaded on: 23.04.2020)
 - [English](#)  size:(0.63 MB)  size:(0.31 MB)
 - [Hindi](#)  size:(0.36 MB)

- Press Release date 15th April 2020 related to Food Hygiene and Safety Guidelines for Food Businesses during Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Pandemic. (Uploaded on: 15.04.2020)
 - [English](#)  size:(0.61 MB)
 - [Hindi](#)  size:(0.31 MB)

Link:

<https://www.fssai.gov.in/press-note.php>