

Post raids, 4,518 apply for food business licence, registration

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As many as 4,518 food business operators (FBOs) applied for licence/registration during the past one month in response to a special drive initiated by the food safety teams under the Tandrust Punjab Mission.

Over 60 per cent of the FBOs in the state, however, remain unlicensed.

The licence/registration certificate issued by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is mandatory under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.

The Act deals with standard of food articles, their manufacture, storage, distribution and sale regulations. Besides the producers of bulk food items, including bread, pickles, sweets, chips, the Act also applies to small vendors selling eatables and even grocers. It also covers hotels, restaurants and marriage palaces.

Commissioner, Food and Drug Administration, KS Pannu said: "The state, at present, has around 19,000 licensed and 47,000 registered FBOs. Over one lakh FBOs have still not applied for the license or registration."

Licence is must for FBOs having an annual turnover of more than Rs12 lakh. The FBOs that have an annual turnover of less than Rs 12 lakh are required to be registered with the food authorities.

A member of the raiding food safety team said: "Adulteration and use of substandard food stuff is generally the reason behind cases of food poisoning. At present, we are visiting various FBOs and asking them to get registered. Strict penal action will follow after a cut-off date."

Licence-seekers were required to pay an annual fee of Rs 2,000, while those seeking registration needed to pay only Rs 100 a year, the official said.

Pannu said 1,113 FBOs have applied for licences and 3,405 for registration. The department has issued 531 licences and 2,057 registration certificates over the past 30 days, generating a revenue of around Rs 66 lakh.

District Ludhiana tops the chart with approval of 61 licences and 312 registration certificates, Jalandhar is next with 61 licences and 90 registrations, followed by Mohali with 60 licences and 138 registrations.

Rs 66-lakh revenue

- In all, 1,113 FBOs have applied for licences and 3,405 for registration
- The authorities have issued 531 licences and 2,057 registration certificates over the past 30 days, thus earning around Rs 66 lakh
- Every licence-seekers needs to pay an annual fee of Rs 2,000, while those seeking registration need to pay only Rs 100 a year