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FSSAI orders FBOs to use blue colour in manufacturing of industrial ice

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E-Paper

FSSAI has ordered food business operators (FBOs) across India to use blue food colour in the manufacturing of industrial ice to differentiate it from the edible ice, which will remain colourless. The order shall come into effect from June 2018.

The circular by the country's apex food regulator stated, "The use of non-edible ice, which is made from non-potable water, for edible purpose is a health hazard. Similarly, the incorrect use of non-edible ice for preservation, storage and transportation of perishable food commodities may lead to food contamination." According to FSSAI, it has been observed that in the absence of any visible distinction between the edible and non-edible ice, the latter is also being used for consumption.

To check the misuse of non-edible ice as edible ice, FSSAI has decided that food colours Indigo Carmine and Brilliant Blue up to 10 parts per million (ppm) must be used in production of non-edible ice and non-edible ice blocks coming in contact with the food products during preservation, storage or transportation of food commodities, to give it a bluish look or appearance, so as to enable clear difference between the two.

All the FBOs engaged in the production or use of edible or non-edible ice must ensure visible distinction between the two by using food colour in non-edible ice by June 2018. FSSAI has also directed the food safety commissioners of states and Union Territories (UTs) to enhance the surveillance and enforcement on the sale of non-edible ice so as to ensure compliance with this directive.

Taking into consideration that 70 per cent of the edible ice used by the food vendors is contaminated, Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Maharashtra, in the month of April 2018, directed the businesses involved in the manufacturing of industrial ice to use blue colour to differentiate it from the edible ice. The western state was the first state to do so.

A senior official from FDA Maharashtra said, "We had sent a proposal to the government, and they seem positive about it. Finally, we have got the nod from the government, and we have implemented it across the state." "A meeting was held with various stakeholders related to the manufacturing of industrial ice, and it was decided to make the use of blue colour for industrial purposes, whereas edible ice should look crystal clear," he added.

Roadside vendors buy the ice from manufacturers of industrial ice at lower prices and use it in beverages. Industrial ice is used for preservation of dead bodies, in medicines and cement factories, amongst others. FSSAI has already prescribed the standards for edible ice under the Food Safety and Standards (Food Product Standards and Food Additives) Regulations, 2011.

Further, through an order last year, FSSAI conveyed that any ice or ice blocks used in preservation, storage or transportation of food products or coming in contact with food products should conform to the microbiological requirements as prescribed of edible ice under the given regulation.