



Stricter Penalty For Offenders: FSSAI

The Food Safety and Standards Association of India is reported to be looking to amend the standards for food items as a means to tighten the noose around food business operators, including manufacturers, sellers and distributors who do not adhere to the standards set by the FSSAI.

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The act that they are looking to amend is the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006. The amendment is to be made in order to revise the penalty structure, wherein the offenders will be given much stricter penalty and punishments than what is given today. For example, the penalty for selling misbranded or sub-standard food right now is between Rs 3 – 5 lakh. This is likely to be increased significantly. Changes are expected with regard to the punishments given to offenders as well. Manufacturers, sellers and distributors caught selling unsafe food resulting in both death-like situation and death could receive life imprisonment and an increase in fine with the new amendment.

Currently, the punishment for unsafe food that has resulted in death is life imprisonment and a fine of Rs 10 lakh and that for unsafe food resulting in grievous injury or death-like situation is an imprisonment of 6 years and a fine of Rs 5 lakh. It is to be noted that this revision of the penalty structure has come at a time when India is still seeing pretty high rates of food adulteration.

Food adulteration rate in India has almost doubled over the last 5 years according to data sourced from FSSAI annual reports. Food adulteration rate in India stood at 13% in 2011-12 which increased to 23% in 2016-17. The final details of the penalty & punishment structure are yet to be finalized. These changes proposed by the FSSAI could very well take about 4-6 months to come into effect according to reports.