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VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

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Ice-cream makers told to adhere to FSSAI guidelines

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The Health Department conducted a meeting with ice-cream makers in the city and instructed them to adhere to FSSAI standards for manufacturing.

The meeting was conducted at the DHO's office. It was attended by around a dozen ice-cream makers from the district.

Officials of the Health Department are conducting meetings with FBOs (food business operators) from different areas and sensitising them regarding food safety norms stipulated by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India.

These meetings are part of the state government's recently launched initiative 'Tandarust Punjab', wherein Health Department officials are sending out a strong message to FBOs to ensure serving/selling hygienic food products to avoid punitive action.

District Health Officer Dr Ashok Monga said, "It has been observed that to minimise their input cost for manufacturing ice-cream, a few manufacturers add sub-standard materials, thereby compromising health of residents of the district."

Dr Monga added, "The ice-cream makers are instructed to use standard (natural) colours as prescribed by FSSAI. Those using synthetic colours would be dealt strictly as per the food safety norms. It has also been observed that a few ice-cream makers, instead of using regular sugar, are putting sodium saccharin (benzoic sulfimide) while manufacturing ice-creams. The saccharin is an artificial sweetener with effectively no food energy, which must not be used as per the norms. Sub-standard creams and other material must be avoided. Even starch is used to enhance the thickness of the cream, which is comparatively a cheaper but unhealthy method."

Any ice-cream maker not adhering to the food safety guidelines can invite penalty up to Rs 5 lakh. Apart from food safety guidelines and maintaining proper hygiene, the ice-cream makers were also instructed to adhere to licensing norms.

Proper labelling, cleanliness at production sight and wearing of gloves and caps during production were other aspects discussed during the meeting. There are around 12 small and large scale ice-cream makers in Bathinda.