

## FSSAI to track down unlicensed food business operators

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**COIMBATORE, SEPTEMBER 15, 2019**

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is planning to track down food business operators (FBOs) selling food online without obtaining licence from the food safety regulator.

Designated Food Safety Officer for Coimbatore K. Tamilselvan said that the FSSAI had received information about such FBOs who mostly operate out of their houses or rented buildings. They often sell food under the tag “home made” through online food delivery aggregators such as Swiggy, Zomato and Uber Eats.

Section 63 of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, deals with punishment for carrying out a business without licence. As per the Act, those engaged in the manufacture, sale, stocking, distribution, import or export of any article of food without licence shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term that may extend to six months and also with a fine that may extend to five lakh rupees.

Secretary of Coimbatore District Hoteliers Association M. Sivakumar said the Association has only 200 hotels and restaurants as members, while around 1,400 FBOs were selling food through the three major online food delivery aggregators in Coimbatore.

“Members of the Association are those who comply with all the requisite norms including that of the FSSAI, Health and the Labour Department. We do not know whether others have licence or registration of FSSAI. Online food delivery aggregators should check whether FBOs are complying with all norms before adding them to the food delivery network,” he said.

Coimbatore has an estimated number of 31,153 FBOs. While FBOs with an annual turnover of ₹ 12 lakh or above must obtain licence from FSSAI, those with an annual turnover below ₹ 12 lakh are mandated to get themselves registered with the regulatory body.