

FSSAI notifies amendment regarding alcoholic beverage regulations specifying limit

Tuesday, 16 February, 2021

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The FSSAI has notified the Alcoholic Beverage Standards' amendment regulations specifying the tolerance limit (alcohol by volume-abv) of ethyl alcohol content, defining the low alcohol beverages, wines, wine based beverages and Indian Brandy.

Called the Food Safety and Standards (Alcoholic Beverages) First Amendment Regulations, 2020 and Food Business Operators-FBOs were asked to comply with all the provisions of these regulations by July 1, 2021.

According to the regulation, Indian brandy shall be made either from neutral spirit or rectified spirit or a mixture of both. On the label, the name 'Indian Brandy' shall be followed by a statement within brackets as 'made from molasses spirit/grain spirit/neutral spirit' with a font size that is easily readable. The font size of the words 'Indian' and 'Brandy' shall be the same.

The regulations says that "the tolerance limit for ethyl alcohol content for up to 20 per cent abv shall be ± 0.3 per cent (-0.5 per cent for up to 90 ml per bottle) and for more than 20 per cent abv it shall be ± 1.0 per cent (-1.5 per cent for up to 90 ml per bottle) of the declared strength. In case of wine the tolerance limit shall be ± 0.5 ."

Further, the amendment regulations says, "Alcoholic beverages containing more than 0.5 per cent abv but not more than 8.0 per cent. abv may be called a low alcoholic beverage." Previously, alcoholic beverages containing not more than 8.0 per cent abv were called low alcoholic beverages.

The regulations also specify different types of wines including Dry Wine, which is a wine that contains upto 0.9 per cent sugar, Sparkling wine including Brut, Extra Dry, Dry, Semi Dry and Sweet based on sugar content and Fortified Wine, which is a wine with high alcohol content achieved by the addition of alcohol (brandy or wine spirits or neutral spirit of agricultural origin) provided a minimum 7 .0 per cent comes from fermentation of grapes, grape must and fruits and used as aperitif or dessert wine. Fortified wine may be red or white, dry or sweet.

The regulations also specify the wine based beverages, as a beverage obtained from at least 50 by volume of wine, which could have undergone the treatments such as

sweetening, colouring, addition of aromatising substances or preparations, addition of food-related products, including water, for which the actual alcoholic strength by volume is equal to or above 3.5 vol. and below 14.5 vol., and for which the alcoholic component derived exclusively from the wine or special wine used, except for doses used only to dilute aromatic substances, or colourants, or any other approved substance.

The regulations also specify the requirements for Labelling of Wine and asked the FBOs to indicate the origin (country or state) of wine and declare the range of sugar, the generic name of variety of grape or fruit used in descending order of quantity or raw material used, geographic origin, and vintage year, if such claims are made, the name of residues of preservatives or additives present as such, or in their modified forms, in the final product, and declare the name of the place, or region, sub-region or appellation, if 75 per cent the grapes come from that place.

For size of warning words on label, the regulation says that 'size of statutory warning shall not be less than 1.5 mm for pack size of upto 200ml and for pack size above 200 ml, size of the warning shall not be less than 3 mm'.