

Food Regulator FSSAI finds e-commerce platforms operating with restaurants without necessary registration

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HBI Staff | Mumbai

During a review by FSSAI today of e-Commerce food platforms, FSSAI has found that e-Commerce platforms did not have details of FSSAI license and /or registration in respect of as many as 30-40% of the restaurants listed on their sites. Some of the e-commerce platforms had not even obtained license by themselves. As per conditions of license, such e-Commerce platform could only list restaurants that have FSSAI license or registration.

Earlier, late last month, FSSAI had directed leading e-Commerce Food Service Providers like Swiggy, Zomato, Foodpanda, UberEats and others to de-list non-FSSAI licensed food business from their platform by 31st July, 2018 after receiving consumer complaints of sub-standard food being served through e-commerce platforms. The aggregators were advised to display FSSAI license number on their platform along with name and location of the restaurants.

In the review meeting held early this month, the regulator found that some of the leading food aggregators are operating without FSSAI License or registration. In many cases, listed food businesses have recently applied for FSSAI License/ Registration but still do not possess them.

The Regulator gave a time of two-weeks to these food aggregators to submit an action plan to de-list un-Licensed or non-Registered food businesses. These aggregators were also advised to promote food safety and hygiene amongst their listed food businesses by training of food safety supervisors, compliance of Good Hygiene Practices (GHP), ensuring display of 'Food Safety Boards' on their premises, etc. It has also been decided to conduct audit of IT platforms of these e-Commerce food aggregators from the angle of compliances for food safety and hygiene under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 read with Food Safety (Licensing and Registration) Regulations, 2011.

Pawan Agarwal, CEO, FSSAI, said, "This is part of special drive by the regulator to bring in all food businesses under the FSSAI licensing regime and ensure compliance of the food safety laws." He further appealed to these aggregators to begin to use some of their resources in training and capacity building of restaurants for improving food safety and hygiene rather than focusing only on deep discounts and aggressive marketing to build consumer traction to their respective platforms.