

FSSAI gives aggregators 2 weeks to dump unlicensed eateries

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NEW DELHI, AUGUST 2

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has given leading food aggregators two more weeks to submit action plans on delisting unlicensed and non-registered restaurants. It is also planning to conduct an audit of food aggregators to check their compliance levels with food safety regulations.

On Wednesday, the food regulator had a review meeting with 10 food aggregators — Zomato, Swiggy, UberEats, Foodpanda, Faasos, FoodCloud, Foodmingo, JusFood, Box8 and LimeTray.

During the review, it found nearly 30-40 per cent of restaurants on these platforms were either unlicensed or unregistered. This is after the regulator had directed these players to de-list such restaurants or eateries by July 31.

FSSAI also noted that some food aggregators had been operating without a licence. “In many cases, listed food businesses have recently applied for FSSAI license/registration but still do not possess them,” FSSAI noted.

Pawan Agarwal, CEO, FSSAI, said these measures were part of a special drive being undertaken to ensure compliance with food safety laws by all food operators. “We have notified regulations that bring food aggregators and food e-commerce platforms within the purview of the food safety law, and we hope these platforms begin to take food safety seriously from a regulatory standpoint,” he added.

Zomato, Swiggy response

A spokesperson for Zomato said: “While we can't comment on the number (of such restaurants) since they are changing by the hour, we can assure that we are working with the FSSAI and the restaurant industry actively to make sure that everybody is compliant with the guidelines.”

A spokesperson for Swiggy said it was closely working to ensure that there is a compliance plan for all restaurant partners.

“We are working with reputed third-party agencies to set up a support system and help expedite this process for them,” the spokesperson said.

FSSAI guidelines, which became operational in February, make it mandatory for e-commerce food services platforms to display the FSSAI licence or registration number of the restaurants listed on their platforms. In addition, food e-commerce players, excluding those that only provide listing or directory services, need to obtain an FSSAI license.