



Regulation about liquor warning labels to come into force from April 1

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Our Bureau, New Delhi

The Food Safety and Standards (Alcoholic Beverages Standards) Regulations, 2018 shall come into force from April 1, 2019 that prescribes warning label on liquor bottles.

The country's apex food regulator has issued a notification in this regard, stating that a transition period of one year was given to the FBOs (food business operators) to comply with the provisions of these regulations.

From April 1, liquor bottles should carry two statutory warnings, viz. Consumption of alcohol is injurious to health and Be safe - Don't drink and drive.

For alcoholic beverage bottles up to 200ml, the letters on the label, all in capitals, should not be less than 1.5mm high. Bottles larger than 200ml will have letters 3mm tall.

The rule also prescribed that the language of the warning shall be printed in English and/or one or more local or regional language.

However, the notification stated that a time period of six months would be allowed for use of old unused labels and printed cans. It added that alcoholic beverages manufactured prior to April 1, 2019 can be sold in the market up to March 31, 2020.

Meanwhile, the notification by the FSSAI also stated that it has decided to defer the implementation of parameters for yeast in various categories of beer, the modification of certain specific provisions for alcoholic beverages like the tolerance limit for ethyl alcohol, the regulation regarding low alcoholic beverages, the insertion of a new category of Indian Brandy, regulations regarding malt whiskey, dry wine, the limit of water, and alcoholic beverages with geographical indication (GI) tag, amongst others.

It is pertinent to mention here that a PIL was filed by Prince Singhal, founder, Community Against Drunken Driving, in 2017, in the Delhi High Court, seeking direction from the FSSAI

about mentioning the statutory warning on the alcoholic beverages.

It referred to regulations in several countries like the United States, South Africa, Mexico, Turkey, etc., which have been able to implement such regulations.

Apart from the warning, the specific labelling requirements will also need a declaration about the alcohol content, allergen warning, no nutritional data, no health claim, restriction on words such as non-intoxicating or words implying similar meaning on the label of beverage containing more than 0.5 per cent alcohol by volume.