

# The Tribune

VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

## Over 200 food business operators get training in safety norms in city

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More than 200 food business operators were trained in the district by the Health Department in food safety norms prescribed by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India.

The state Health Department's initiative is aimed at spreading awareness among food product manufacturers/sellers to ensure maximum compliance with the food safety norms and minimal lapses (on account of unawareness). After administering training of four hours, the Health Department also provided a safety kit (gloves, apron and headgear) and issued a certificate (food supervisor) to the trainees.

Talking to Bathinda Tribune, Dr Ashok Monga, District Health Officer said, "In a first-of-its-kind initiative by the state Health Department, every food business operator and seller needs to undergo four-hour training on food safety norms. The idea is to spread awareness among FBOs regarding food safety norms and standards stipulated by the FSSAI. It has been observed that there is not much awareness among FBOs regarding food safety norms/guidelines and when officials of the Health Department raid/check any food outlet or selling store then owners or staff claim that they do not know about a particular norm or guideline."

Dr Monga added, "Training will not only increase awareness about food safety norms among FBOs, but will also result in increased compliance. As a result, people will get to eat hygienic food. With food business operators being provided awareness, there will be less chances that they would ignore food safety norms. And still if they do then strict punitive action would be taken against them."

The state Health Department has hired a private agency to impart training to FBOs. A team of the agency is not only delivering training at different venues, but also reaching out to FBOs in the city to convince them to undergo training. To undergo training, any food business operator is required to pay a subscription fee of Rs 708 (including GST).

During the training, FBOs are sensitised to food safety standards for food preparation, processing, handling, storing, selling and servicing while maintaining proper hygiene standards. The food safety norms training began on March 18 and expected to continue for another two months. In the past more than three weeks, a sizeable number of FBOs in Bathinda city, Rampura and Bhagta areas have been covered by the department.