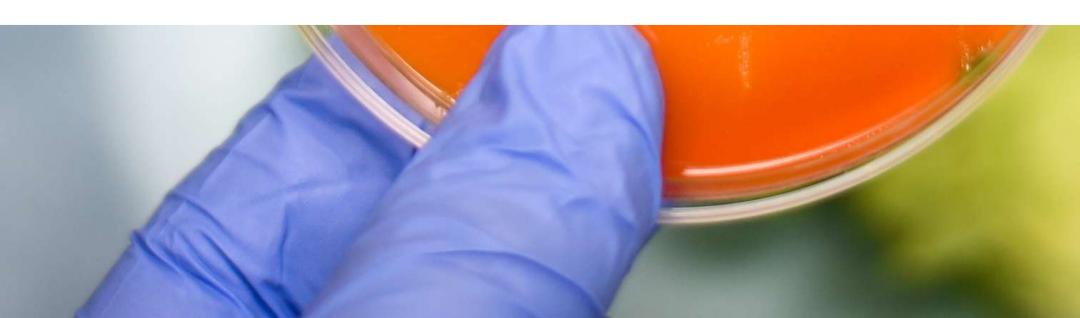


FSSAI plans to initiate E-inspection of food businesses



FSSAI plans to initiate E-inspection of food businesses

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) plans to introduce a new inspection mechanism for restaurants and food chains. The new mechanism will include virtual inspections through videos and images.

FSSAI has segregated eight categories: dairy, meat, fish, egg, nutrition-based food, prepared food, and Indian sweets.

Inoshi Sharma, executive director, compliance strategy FSSAI, said a plan had been prepared, keeping in mind the risk involved with food. This will enable the authorities to inspect the premises of Food business operators, especially those that fall under high-risk food categories, better and more rigorous.

Mr Sharma also directed the commissioners of food safety of all the states and Union territories to make sure that the inspection plan is appropriately executed and track such inspections' progress. The commissioners will also review pendency from time to time so that the target inspections can be conducted as decided.

The new rules have also added criteria for "exemption from inspection"- wherein audits from 3rd party audit firms will be allowed. If the FBO receives an 80% plus score in FSSAIs third party order, then the inspection by the food safety officer can be exempted for two financial years.

The inspection will be pre-informed to the FBOs. However, this does not mean that the designated officer won't be allowed to conduct raids or searches. If there is a question about food safety or foodborne illness, the officer shall be entitled to raid and conduct a surprise inspection.

Food items like milk and milk products, meat and meat products, fish and fish products, and slaughterhouses must have a Pre-license.