The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has asked heads of the departments of Police, Education, Collegiate Education, and Health as well as secretaries of local bodies in Kozhikode district to ensure that firms that supply food at mass gatherings have licence issued by the authority.
This follows complaints about the quality of food served and sold at religious festivals, school youth festivals, sports meets and office canteens.

P.K. Eliyamma, Assistant Commissioner, FSSAI, Kozhikode, told *The Hindu* that the State Food Safety Commissioner on April 20, 2016 had issued an order saying that those who sell food in such places should compulsorily have the licence issued by the authority.

“Any thing being cooked and sold outside your kitchen and open markets should have the FSSAI licence,” she said.

Food poisoning was recently reported from Cheruvannur and Koodaranhi grama panchayats. At Narikkuni, eight people were down with food poisoning after they reportedly had a curry made of chicken parts. The beverages, such as sugar cane juice, being distributed outside religious gatherings lack hygiene and the sellers often don’t have any licence. It is reported that they use adulterated ice blocks. Water is sourced often from water tankers.

Organisers of such events are supposed to seek permission from the Health Department to distribute food and approval from the Police Department to use mike system.

Along with these, Ms. Eliyamma said, the authorities should also ensure that they have the FSSAI licence too. The order has been forwarded to the Superintendent of Police, District Medical Officer, Kozhikode City Corporation Secretary, Deputy Director of Panchayat, municipal secretaries in Vadakara, Koyilandy, Ramanattukara, Koduvally, Feroke, Mukkom, and Payyoli, deputy directors of education, higher secondary education and collegiate education.

Section 119 of the Public Health Act, 1939, says that the authority in charge of any fair or festival should intimate the executive authority or health officer the date of beginning of any festival and other details two months in advance. This provision is reportedly not followed often, sources in the Health Department said. Although local bodies such as panchayats, municipalities and corporations have relevant laws to deal with any eventuality, a uniform law applicable to all institutions is yet to be formulated.