FSSAI issues directive revising standards for tin used in food packaging

Dated: 01st November 2017 (Wednesday) E-Paper

Mumbai: The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), through its recent directive, has revised the standards for tin that is used for the packaging of food products.

Food Safety and Standards (Packaging and Labelling) Regulations, 2011, prescribed the packaging requirements for edible oil/fat as, “The tin plate used for the manufacture of tin containers for packaging edible oils and fats shall conform to the standards of prime grade quality contained in Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) No 1993 or 13955 or 9025 or 13954, as amended from time to time, and the tin containers used for the packaging of edible oils and fats shall conform to IS No 10325 or 10339, as amended from time to time.”

Through the directive, the country’s apex regulator has revised the edition of IS 1993. The revised edition will supersede IS 13955, IS 9025 and IS 13954. It stated, “Containers made of tin are used for packaging other food products, besides edible oils and fats. Therefore the tin plates used for packaging of all kinds of foods have to be of the required quality in order to maintain and ensure the safety of foods they contain.”

Specification conformation Keeping in view the safety of foods, the regulator has decided that the tin plates intended for the manufacture of tin containers for the packaging of any article of food products must conform to the specification laid down in IS 1993/ISO 11949, relating to cold-reduced electrolytic tin plate.

Any such tin containers once already used for packaging cannot be reused for the packaging of any article of food.

An expert from the food packaging sector explained, “The term tin plate refers to a low-carbon mild steel sheet, varying in thickness from about 0.15 to 0.5mm with a coating of tin between 2.8 to 17gsm (0.4 to 2.5µm thick) on each surface of the material.”

“Today, the tin plate has become universally adopted for the manufacture of containers and closures for foods and beverages, largely due to several important qualities of this metal,” he added.

“These include its mechanical strength and resistance to working, superior barrier properties to gases, moisture and light, ability to withstand wide extremes of temperature and ideal surfaces for decoration and lacquering,” the expert said.
“Increasing the usage of tin plate in the food packaging minimises the usage of plastics. The process of depositing tin by electroplating is common, but the different thicknesses of tin to be applied for the two surfaces of the steel and coating must be selected in such a way that they withstand the different conditions of the interior and exterior of the container for different food applications with less cost-effectiveness,” he added.