Press Note

FSSAI all set to implement Food Safety and Standards (Alcoholic Beverages) Regulations, 2018

As per the definition of ‘food’ in the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 alcoholic beverages are also regulated by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) for the matters related to licensing and registration, framing of standards and issues concerning the safety of alcoholic drinks. Accordingly, the Commissioner of Food Safety in a State/UT is responsible for ensuring availability of safe and wholesome food to the consumers while the Excise Department of a State/UT is responsible to implement the excise policy of the State/UT which includes fixing and realization of excise duty and other related matters.

The FSSAI had in 2008 notified a separate regulation for alcoholic drinks. The new regulations called the Food Safety and Standards (alcoholic Beverages) regulations 2018 has come in to force from 1st April, 2019, except the parameter for yeast in various categories of beer, and with the modification of certain specific provisions as per the direction issued by FSSAI on 2nd April, 2019. This direction has been issued after considering the representations received from the stakeholders in respect of the challenges in complying with certain specific requirements like statutory warning, declaring amount of sugar in wines, yeast in Beer etc.

As per this direction, a time period of 6 months is allowed for use of old unused labels and printed cans. Alcoholic beverages manufactured prior to 1st April, 2019 along with old labels can be sold in the market up to 31st March 2020 or till the finalisation of proposed modifications in certain specific provisions. Further, the size of the Statutory warning with capital letters have been relaxed to 1.5 mm in case of alcoholic beverage bottles of up to 200 ml and the letter size of 3mm will be applicable to bottles larger than 200ml.

This direction also enables the FBOs to continue manufacturing, importing, packing and distributing of craft beer and wine based beverages currently traded/ available in the market. However, for any new innovative alcoholic beverage not covered under these regulations the FBO has to approach FSSAI for consideration.

Further, with a view to facilitate ease of trade while ensuring the safety of alcohol imported to India, special dispensation on labelling has been allowed for the rectifiable labelling deficiencies in case of statutory warning. The rectification will be carried out at custom bound warehouses by affixing non-detachable stickers.

While it is clearly acknowledged that consumption of alcohol is injurious to health, FSSAI’s earnest initiative is to create awareness and understanding among food business operators/traders, consumers and food safety officials about different types of Alcoholic Beverages and their regulation in the country.

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