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FOOD STORAGE GUIDELINES

THE FOOD SAFETY AND STANDARDS AUTHORITY OF INDIA

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India was established under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, with the intent of

consolidating various acts and orders that have handled Food related issues in various Ministries and Departments. The FSSAI aims at creating basic standards for articles of food and regulate their manufacture, storage, distribution, sale and import of food products.

IMPORTANT PROVISIONS ON FOOD STORAGE UNDER THE FOOD SAFETY AND STANDARDS ACT, 2006:

1. **SECTION 25: All imports of articles of food to be subject to this Act.-**

- (1) No person shall import into India –
- (i) any unsafe or misbranded or sub-standard food or food containing extraneous matter;
 - (ii) any article of food for the import of which a licence is required under any Act or rules or regulations, except in accordance with the conditions of the licence; and
 - (iii) any article of food in contravention of any other provision of this Act or of any rule or regulation made thereunder or any other Act.

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(2) The Central Government shall while prohibiting, restricting or otherwise regulating import of article of food under the Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992 (22 of 1992) follow the standards laid down by the Food Authority under the provisions of this Act and the Rules and regulations made thereunder.

2. SECTION 26: Responsibilities of the Food business operator.:

1) Every food business operator shall ensure that the articles of food satisfying the requirements of this Act and the rules and regulations made thereunder at all stages of production, processing, import, distribution and sale within the businesses under his control.

(2) No food business operator shall himself or by any person on his behalf manufacture, store, sell or distribute any article of food –

(i) which is unsafe; or

(ii) which is misbranded or sub-standard or contains extraneous matter;
or

(iii) for which a licence is required, except in accordance with the conditions of the licence; or

(iv) which is for the time being prohibited by the Food Authority or the Central Government or the State Government in the interest of public health; or

(v) in contravention of any other provision of this Act or of any rule or regulation made thereunder.

(3) No food business operator shall employ any person who is suffering from infectious, contagious or loathsome disease.

(4) No food business operator shall sell or offer for sale any article of food to any vendor unless he also gives a guarantee in writing in the form specified by regulations about the nature and quality of such article to the vendor:

Provided that a bill, cash memo, or invoice in respect of the sale of any article of food given by a food business operator to the vendor shall be deemed to be a guarantee under this section, even if a guarantee in the specified form is not included in the bill, cash memo or invoice.

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(5) Where any food which is unsafe is part of a batch, lot or consignment of food of the same class or description, it shall be presumed that all the food in that batch, lot or consignment is also unsafe, unless following a detailed assessment within a specified time, it is found that there is no evidence that the rest of the batch, lot or consignment is unsafe:

Provided that any conformity of a food with specific provisions applicable to that food shall be without prejudice to the competent authorities taking appropriate measures to impose restrictions on that food being placed on the market or to require its withdrawal from the market for the reasons to be recorded in writing where such authorities suspect that despite the conformity, the food is unsafe.

3. Section 27. Liability of the manufacturers, packers, wholesalers, distributors and sellers:

(1) The manufacturer or packer of an article of food shall be liable for such article of food if it does not meet the requirements of this Act and the rules and regulations made thereunder.

(2) The wholesaler or distributor shall be liable under this Act for any article of food which is—

- (a) Supplied after the date of its expiry; or
- (b) Stored or supplied in violation of the safety instructions of the Manufacturer; or
- (c) Unsafe or misbranded; or
- (d) Unidentifiable of manufacturer from whom the article of food have been received; or
- (e) Stored or handled or kept in violation of the provisions of this Act, the rules and regulations made thereunder; or
- (f) received by him with knowledge of being unsafe.

(2) The seller shall be liable under this Act for any article of food which is –

- (a) sold after the date of its expiry; or
- (b) handled or kept in unhygienic conditions; or
- (c) misbranded; or
- (d) unidentifiable of the manufacturer or the distributors from whom such articles of food were received; or

(e) received by him with knowledge of being unsafe.

4. Section 28. Food recall procedures.

(1) If a food business operator considers or has reasons to believe that a food which he has processed, manufactured or distributed is not in compliance with this Act, or the rules or regulations made thereunder, he shall immediately initiate procedures to withdraw the food in question from the market and consumers indicating reasons for its withdrawal and inform the competent authorities thereof.

(2) A food business operator shall immediately inform the competent authorities and co-operate with them, if he considers or has reasons to believe that a food which he has placed on the market may be unsafe for the consumers.

(3) The food business operator shall inform the competent authorities of the action taken to prevent risks to the consumer and shall not prevent or discourage any person from cooperating in accordance with this Act, with the

competent authorities, where this may prevent, reduce or eliminate a risk arising from a food.

(4) Every food business operator shall follow such conditions and guidelines relating to food recall procedures as the Food Authority may specify by regulations.

5. Food Safety & Standards Regulations, 2011:

The regulations are silent in this regard.

6. MILK AND MILK PRODUCT ORDER, 1992

No Guidelines as such on the Storage & Distribution of Milk Products.

7. OTHER GENERAL GUIDELINES:

1. The premises should be located in a sanitary place free from filthy surroundings and shall maintain overall hygienic environment;
2. B Floors, ceilings and walls must be maintained in sound condition. They should be smooth and easy to clean with no flanking paint or plaster;

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3. Food storage facilities should be designed and constructed effectively protected from contamination during storage;
4. Temperature and humidity which are necessary as mentioned on the label under storage conditions shall be maintained;
5. Pest infestations should be dealt with immediately and without adversely affecting food safety;
6. Personnel known or believed to be suffering from or to be a carrier of a disease should not be allowed in a food handling area;
7. Food handlers should maintain a high degree of cleanliness;
8. The food business shall ensure that visitors to its handling and storage areas must wherever applicable wear protective clothing, footwear and adhere to other personnel hygiene;
8. The vehicles or transportation should be clean and dedicated for the purpose and should not carry anything else;
9. All food during transportation should be kept covered to limit pathogen growth by control;
10. Dry fermented food viz. sterilized milk, bottled beverages, canned food etc. should be stored properly during transportation to ensure that seals remain intact and undamaged;
11. Foods should be kept at right temperature;
12. Vegetarian foods should be stored above non vegetarian foods and cooked foods above uncooked foods on separate racks in the refrigerators;
13. Storage temperature for frozen food should be 18 degree centigrade or below;
14. Storage instructions for food packaging should be followed.

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