



Food Safety Regulations in India

*Sarang Santhosh and Dr. Anu Rajan. S

College of Agriculture, Vellayani, Kerala Agriculture University, India

*Corresponding Author's email: sarang2001s@gmail.com

How often do the flavours of a mouthwatering samosa from a busy Indian street vendor or a shiny package in a supermarket conceal hidden dangers? Nearly 25% of the thousands of products that India's food safety regulators inspect each year do not meet national standards. This finding highlights the scope of the problem and the pressing need for reform. The consequences are extremely high, with 120,000 fatalities and more than 100 million foodborne illnesses each year. However, empowered regulators, science-based policies, and an enthusiastic public committed to demanding safer food from every rickshaw cart to the shelves of international supermarkets have all contributed to India's recent food safety revolution. India's approach to food safety combines tradition, technology, and law—from viral street food hygiene campaigns to Supreme Court-led reforms and global partnerships—demonstrating that, beneath the glitz and glamour, food safety is actually a matter of public survival and national pride.

Food safety regulations in India

With the help of science-based laws and strict enforcement, India has established a strong legal framework for food safety that protects both the public's health and the quality of its food supply. At each level, the FSSAI, which serves as the central authority, is essential in establishing standards, monitoring adherence, and raising consumer awareness. India's approach to food safety underwent a fundamental change with the passage of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006. Before this Act, food regulation was regulated by a number of dispersed laws, which made standardization difficult and enforcement uneven. Through the setting up of the FSSAI as the supreme body in charge of defining science-based standards, overseeing food enterprises, and guaranteeing adherence to safety regulations, the Act centralized food regulatory functions. By connecting food safety across states, this consolidation enhances efficiency and clarity by implementing a "one nation, one food law" system which refers to the unification and standardization of all food-related laws and regulations under a single, comprehensive legal framework. This approach aimed to harmonize regulations, simplify compliance for food businesses, and ensure uniform food safety standards across all states, which enhances consumer protection and facilitates smoother food trade within and outside the country.

FSSAI

An independent statutory body established under the Food Safety and Standards Act of 2006, FSSAI ensures to provide safe and wholesome food for human consumption in India. It sets science-based standards for food products and regulates their manufacture, storage, distribution, sale, and import. Food safety and quality standards are fully covered by the FSSAI's regulations. Acceptable compositions, hygienic procedures, and allowable limits on contaminants and adulterants are all outlined in Food Product Standards. International best practices and new scientific findings are frequently incorporated into these standards. To safeguard the health of consumers, the Food Additives Regulations outline which substances

are permitted in food, their maximum amounts, and the labelling specifications. By obligating detailed nutritional data, ingredient lists, manufacturing and expiration dates, vegetarian/non-vegetarian symbols, and FSSAI license numbers on products, packaging and labelling regulations guarantee transparency.

Hygiene and safety

In order to safeguard the public's health, hygiene and safety protocols are a vital component of India's food safety laws, which cover a variety of aspects of food handling and processing. Food establishments must maintain hygienic and clean spaces that make cleaning and pest control simple, according to regulations that set forth specific standards for facility design. In order to prevent contamination from structural elements, floors, walls, ceilings, and appliances must be built of non-toxic, easily washable, and non-absorbent materials. To avoid cross-contamination, sufficient space must be set aside for the ideal preparation, storage, and separation of raw and cooked foods. In order to maintain hygienic standards, facilities must also have controlled access, preventing unauthorized personnel from entering.

Potable water availability, sufficient drainage systems, carefully planned waste disposal, along with regular cleaning schedules are all necessary for sanitation. Cleaning products must be approved for use in food environments, and pest control measures are required to prevent infestations. In order to lower the risk of contamination, food workers must wear clean clothing, have access to handwashing stations, and complete food safety training. Personal hygiene is extremely important. Gloves and hairnets are examples of protective equipment that is frequently needed, especially in facilities that process and package food.

Indian regulations place extreme restrictions on chemical contaminants like pesticides, heavy metals, and toxins, as well as microbiological hazards like pathogens and spoilage organisms, in an effort to further protect public health. Food products are routinely sampled for compliance by FSSAI-accredited analytical testing laboratories. Food Safety Officers conduct routine inspections to evaluate the hygienic standards of food businesses using thorough checklists and a grading system that goes from "A+" (exemplary) to "No Grade" (non-compliance). Serious legal penalties for noncompliance include monetary fines, product recalls, suspension of licenses or cancellation, and even facility closure. Together, these actions serve as checkpoints, reducing the possibility of contamination and guaranteeing that food is safe and wholesome from farm to table.

Specialized categories for protection

Specialized categories like organic foods, fortified products, dietary supplements, nutraceuticals, and vegan options are additionally regulated by India's food safety framework. These categories represent the various requirements of consumers and changing market trends in the nation. A notable instance of this is the Food Safety and Standards (Organic Foods) Regulations, 2017, which regulate organic foods. By making sure that organic food products adhere to stringent quality and safety standards, these laws safeguard consumer interests and promote environmentally friendly farming methods.

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry's National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare's Participatory Guarantee System-India (PGS-India) are the two approved certification schemes that organic foods in India must adhere to. While PGS-India prioritizes local stakeholder participation, including producers, consumers, and certifiers, the NPOP adheres to an internationally recognized third-party certification model. Both programs encourage ecologically conscious farming methods by certifying that organic foods are made without the use of artificial fertilizers, pesticides, genetically modified organisms, or ionizing radiation.

The "Jaivik Bharat" logo, a recognizable mark printed on certified organic products indicating verified organic status, was introduced by the FSSAI to promote consumer trust. By representing adherence to national organic standards, this logo guarantees that goods bearing the organic label actually fulfill the requirements. After receiving certifications under

NPOP or PGS-India, food business operators handling organic products are required to obtain FSSAI licenses with organic endorsement. The rules also establish procedures to stop false advertising and inaccurate labeling, which are frequent issues in the organic market.

In addition to organic foods, the FSSAI's comprehensive regulatory approach includes dietary supplements and nutraceuticals for health benefits, vegan foods that accommodate lifestyle choices, and fortified foods enhanced with vital micronutrients to address nutritional deficiencies common in communities. The FSSAI's dedication to staying up to date with global food innovations while preserving consumer rights and public health is demonstrated by this dynamic regulatory adaptation.

All things taken together, the inclusion of specialty food categories in India's food safety laws demonstrates the FSSAI's proactive and developing approach to regulating a variety of food items, promoting consumer trust, market expansion, and sustainable food production systems.

Recent amendments

The FSSAI's recent guidelines and amendments from 2025 suggest the authority's continued dedication to improving and fortifying food safety management in India. With these revisions, regulatory standards have undergone a substantial evolution to better conform to international standards and handle new issues in consumer protection and food safety.

Revising the definitions of some food products to provide more precise classifications and consistent standards has been a key area of focus in 2025. By eliminating uncertainties that previously resulted in inconsistent compliance, this aids in standardizing production and labelling procedures for more recent and varied food products.

In order to provide more accurate control over the chemicals used in food processing, the FSSAI has also updated acceptable limits and analytical techniques and added new standards for food additives. This is meant to accommodate technological advancements in food manufacturing while minimizing the health risks associated with additives.

Special attention has been paid to packaging and labelling, with stricter regulations being implemented to increase consumer transparency. Amendments mandate that nutritional information be displayed more prominently on front-of-pack labels starting July 1, 2025. This includes clear indications of added sugar, saturated fat, sodium content, and calorie count. By giving consumers transparent information on important dietary components, these modifications enable them to make healthier decisions. In order to ensure consumer reliability and ease of identification, the regulations also require logos on products such as milk and foods derived from milk.

The amendments also establish identical descriptions and hygienic standards for fresh, cooked, smoked, and fermented meat sausages, among other newly defined food product standards. To improve industry practices and protect public health, this initiative establishes precise guidelines for composition, preparation, additives, and storage.

The FSSAI has improved its monitoring and compliance systems, such as stricter laboratory testing procedures and food safety audits, in accordance with international best practices. With set enforcement dates facilitating easier compliance transitions, the authority has also made sure that enforcement timelines are predictable for operators of food businesses.

These 2025 amendments collectively demonstrate FSSAI's proactive approach to modifying food safety laws in response to changing consumer demands, international trade regulations, and food technology advancements. In addition to promoting public health and consumer protection, the strategy seeks to improve the quality and competitiveness of Indian food products both domestically and abroad.

Conclusion

India's food safety laws offer a robust, flexible framework that efficiently safeguards consumer health by integrating scientific rigor with real-world enforcement. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), which ensures uniform compliance and

transparency throughout the food industry by streamlining regulatory procedures nationwide, is at the heart of this ecosystem. Public health is protected by this strong regulatory framework, which also increases consumer trust and strengthens India's standing as a trustworthy and competitive participant in the world food market.

References

1. Food Safety and Standards Authority of India. (2025). *Food safety regulations in India*. <https://fssai.gov.in>
2. AIB International. (2023). *Is India on the verge of a major food safety shift?* <https://blog.aibinternational.com/is-india-on-the-verge-of-a-major-food-safety-shift#postComment>
3. Treelife Legal Insights. (2025). *FSSAI rules & regulations - FSSAI standards in India*. <https://treelife.in/legal/fssai-rules-and-regulations-fssai-standards-in-india/>
4. Zolvit Legal Services. (2024). *Food laws regulations and guidelines in India*. <https://www.zolvit.com/fssai/food-laws>