

Government issues instructions to States/UTs and FCI to ensure supply of good quality foodgrains under PDS

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Government has issued following instructions to State Governments / Union Territories and Food Corporation of India (FCI) to ensure supply of good quality foodgrains under Public Distribution System (PDS).

- (i) Only good quality foodgrains free from insect infestation and conforming to Food Safety Standards are to be issued under PDS.
- (ii) Ample opportunities are to be provided to the State Government to check the quality of foodgrains prior to lifting the foodgrains stocks from FCI godowns.
- (iii) Samples of foodgrains are to be collected and sealed from the stocks of foodgrains to be issued under the PDS jointly by FCI and State Governments/UT Administrations.
- (iv) An officer not below the rank of Inspector is to be deputed from State Government to take the delivery of foodgrain stocks from FCI godowns.
- (v) Regular inspection to check the quality of foodgrains is to be carried out by the officers of State Government.
- (vi) It is the responsibility of the concerned State Governments/UT Administrations to ensure that during transportation and storage at different stages in the distribution chain, the foodgrains retain the required quality specifications.
- (vii) The State Government, where the decentralized procurement is in operation, should ensure that the quality of foodgrains issued under PDS and other welfare schemes should meet the desired standards prescribed by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI).

PDS is operated under the joint responsibility of the Central and the State/UT Governments. Central Government is responsible for procurement, allocation and transportation of foodgrains upto the designated depots of the Food Corporation of India. The operational responsibilities for intra-state allocation and distribution of foodgrains within the States/UTs, identification of eligible beneficiaries, issuance of ration cards and supervision and monitoring of the Fair Price Shops (FPSs) etc. rest with the concerned State/UT Governments. Therefore, as and when complaints are received, these are referred to the State/UT Governments concerned for inquiry and appropriate action. Five complaints about supply of poor quality foodgrains distributed under PDS were received during 2016-17.

Regular surveillance, monitoring, inspection and random sampling of all the food products are undertaken by the officials of Food Safety Departments of the respective States/UTs to check that they comply with the standards laid down under Food Safety & Standards Act, 2006 and the Rules & Regulation made thereunder. In cases where food samples are found to be non-conforming, recourse is taken to penal provisions under Chapter-IX of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006. The implementation and enforcement of norms under Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 and Rules & Regulation made thereunder primarily rests with the State/UT Government.

No separate enforcement data regarding samples taken from foodgrains distributed under PDS by Food Safety Authorities of the States/UTs is maintained centrally by FSSAI. However, based on information made available by the States/UTs, details of all food samples received, analyzed, found non-conforming to the norms and action taken under provision of FSS Act, 2006.

This information was given by Shri C.R. Chaudhary, the Minister of State for Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, in written reply to a question in Rajya Sabha today.

BCK/AK

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