



# Measures for Quality and Hygienic Food on Trains and Platforms

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In its endeavour to provide quality and hygienic food to the passengers, Indian Railways have developed and operationalized an institutionalized mechanism for monitoring of quality and hygiene of catering services through regular inspections at various levels to address catering complaints. Further, to improve the standard of food being provided to passengers, new Catering Policy has been issued on 27<sup>th</sup> February, 2017 wherein inter-alia Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Limited (IRCTC) has been mandated to carry out the unbundling by creating a distinction primarily between food preparation and food distribution. In order to upgrade quality of food preparation, IRCTC is to set up new kitchens and upgrade existing ones.

Further, instructions have been issued to provide optional catering service, as a pilot project, on 32 Rajdhani/Shatabdi/Duronto trains under the management of IRCTC w.e.f. 01/08/2017 for an initial period of 180 days. Further steps being taken to ensure that good quality and hygienic food is served to the passengers inter-alia includes (i) Introduction of station based E-Catering for widening the range of options available to passengers for ordering food of their choice. (ii) Introduction of precooked food ('ready to eat' meals) in the range of options available to passengers. (iii) Operation of centralized Catering Service Monitoring Cell (CSMC) (toll free number 1800-111-321) for prompt redressal of passenger grievances relating to the catering activities and real time assistance to travelling public. (iv) Imposition of penalties in case of deficiencies detected in services. (v) Operation of all India Helpline (No.138) for rail-users to lodge complaints/suggestions regarding food and catering services (vi) A Twitter handle @IRCATERING has also been made operational to cater to the complaints/suggestions with regard to catering services. (vii) A policy of zero tolerance towards poor quality of food served to passengers and overcharging is being followed and during the current Financial Year (i.e. April to October'17), 12 catering contracts have been terminated for complaint related to catering or other contractual deficiencies.

As per the Catering Policy, 2017, Rajdhani/Shatabdi /Duronto and other Mail express trains are being monitored by IRCTC's supervisors on regular basis. Besides this, regular microbiological testing of food samples is being conducted by IRCTC, through in-house and NABL (National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories) approved labs. Food Safety & Hygiene audits are being conducted regularly in base kitchens and in trains by Third Party Auditors.

This Press Release is based on the information given by the Minister of State for Railways Shri Rajen Gohain in a written reply to a question in Rajya Sabha on 22.12.2017 (Friday).

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**AKS/MKV/DK**

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