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FSSAI wants action against unlicensed water packaging units

NEW DELHI: Food regulator FSSAI has asked state authorities to crack down on mineral water packaging units that are operating without its licence.

As many as 75 per cent of the packaging units, owned by various firms, including Pepsico and Bisleri, are said to be operating without an FSSAI licence. These units are operating under a BIS certification.

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), however, feels there is no safety or quality concern over the bottled water supplied by these units.

Out of total 5,842 registered water packaging units, 1,495 units have both BIS and FSSAI licences, while 4,347 units have only BIS certification.

"FSSAI regulations require mandatory BIS certification on packaged water. However there is a need for such businesses to obtain FSSAI certification. For which we have already written to the state food commissioners," FSSAI CEO Pawan Agarwal said.

When asked about the quality of the bottled water which are sold without FSSAI licence, he said: "BIS has robust system of ensuring quality of packaged water. There is no issue of safety of packaged water at all, if the packaged water businesses have obtained BIS certification."

Most of the companies have no issues in obtaining FSSAI licence as per the feedback received by the regulator, he added. Stating that many of the bottlers are not abiding by the law, Agarwal said: "Out of close to 6,000 registered packaged water units in the country, more than 4,300 don't have FSSAI licence, which also include some reputed names, where some of their units may not have food regulator's approval."

FSSAI IN NEWS

According to the regulator data, the units which do not have FSSAI licence include units of Hindustan Coca-cola, Pepsico and Bisleri, among others.

Pepsico sells its packaged water under the brand name Aquafina, Coca-cola sells under the name Kinley, while Bisleri sells under its own name.

When contacted, Pepsico India and Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages said that they manufacture packaged drinking water under valid licences.
