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## FSSAI sets the bar for spirits

**SPECIFICATIONS**

**Draft regulations**

- Define what each alcoholic beverage is
- Specify the volume of ethyl alcohol
- Additives which may be used
- Production methods

**Standard drink**  
⇒ 12.7 ml of ethyl alcohol measured at 20 degrees C

**LABELLING REQUIREMENTS**  
Specify alcohol by volume

⇒ **Limits** for potentially toxic elements

⇒ Acetyldehyde, arsenic, cadmium, lead, mercury, methyl alcohol

The new regulations, if approved, will bring in more accountability on the part of manufacturers.

**K. Anilkumar**  
Joint Commissioner of Food Safety

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has for the first time drawn up standards for an entire range of alcoholic beverages such as whisky, brandy, beer, gin, rum, vodka, and the like, including arrack and country spirit and various kinds of wines, with specifications for the alcohol content in each and the additives which may be used in each.

The draft regulations have been put up on the website of the FSSAI and the public has been invited to write in with any objections or suggestions, with scientific

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evidence in support of the same, within a period of 30 days, ie, by October 4, so that these may be taken up by the FSSAI.

The proposed regulations are in line with the standards drawn up by the International Organisation of Vine and Wine (OIV), an intergovernmental organisation which defines international standards and regulatory practices for the wine industry and whose recommendations are approved by member countries, including India

The draft regulations clearly define what each alcoholic beverage is and specifies the amount of ethyl alcohol that each beverage should contain, the additives which may be used, and the production methods which should be adopted for each beverage.

For example, the beverage tequila, “shall be aged in oak barrels”.

The FSSAI has also specified the labelling requirements for each alcoholic beverage. The labelling information should specify the alcohol by volume (abv) and the number of standard drinks each bottle/package has. It has defined each standard drink as 10gm or 12.7ml of ethyl alcohol measured at 20 degree C.

Thus, a 750 ml bottle of 36 per cent abv spirit should be labelled as “contains 22 standard drinks”.

The draft regulations say that no alcoholic beverage should contain nutritional information on the label and that an alcoholic beverage which contains more than 8.0 per cent abv shall not be represented as a “low alcohol beverage”.

The labelling requirements for wines require manufacturers to mention the origin of the wine, generic name of the grape used, and geographic origin and vintage dates.

Joint Commissioner of Food Safety K. Anilkumar said this was the first time that such a comprehensive set of standards, including specifications for labelling declarations, ingredients and even the quality of water to be used were being brought out for alcoholic beverages.

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