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Regulator steps in: Whisky will be whisky, not rum



In case of imported alcoholic beverages, products will have to carry FSSAI logo and licence number along with the name and address of the importer.

NEW DELHI: Alcoholic beverages like vodka, rum, brandy and wine will soon have to go through a regulatory scanner before entering the market. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has come up with draft regulations for alcoholic beverages, laying down standards that the products will have to comply with before seeking approval.

The draft Food Safety and Standards (Alcoholic Beverages Standards) Regulations, 2016, also defines various kinds of alcohol and their further types. For instance, it has laid down definitions for brandy as well as its types like grape brandy, cognac and blended brandy. Similarly, while defining whisky, the draft

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regulations also separately define bourbon, Irish whisky , single malt whisky and scotch whisky among others.

The draft regulations define an alcoholic beverage as a "beverage or a liquor or brew containing more than 0.5% ethyl alcohol (ethanol) by volume as the active agent. The ethyl alcohol used in the production of alcoholic beverages shall be of agricultural origin". It can be either a distilled alcoholic beverage or an undistilled one.

This is for the first time that the government has standardised alcohol as a consumable beyond the purposes for excise tax. FSSAI has invited stakeholder comments on the draft standards by October 9, following which they will be notified. The draft regulations have listed out requirements for each of the product category

Besides, it has also laid down specific labelling requirements for alcoholic beverages that include declaration of alcohol content by volume with geographical designation or names allowed to be used only for products originating strictly from that geographical region and a mandatory allergen warning.

In case of imported alcoholic beverages, products will have to carry FSSAI logo and licence number along with the name and address of the importer. The proposed regulations also prohibit any nutritional information on label of alcoholic beverage.
