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### Tracking hygiene: FSSAI steps up compliance check

Controversies such as the temporary ban on Nestle's Maggi instant noodles appear to have had a bearing on the hospitality sector, with the food regulator stepping up inspections of hotels and restaurants to assess compliance with safety norms.

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has increased its surprise checks and audits on hotels, restaurants and caterers to check hygiene levels and food quality.

Even five-star hotels are under the scanner and have had food safety officials carry out surprise inspections of their restaurants, hoteliers and restaurateurs said.

“The number of checks has gone up. We have had recent surprise checks in our hotel in Gurgaon and east Delhi and even in locations like Hyderabad and Indore to check the quality of food,” said Rajeev Janveja, corporate chef at Lemon Tree Hotels.

Food safety has been in public focus since last year, when FSSAI banned the sale of Nestle's Maggi noodles in the country for containing contaminants, although the order was eventually revoked.

Nestle BSE -0.26 % maintained at the time that the product was safe. “After the Maggie issue, the FSSAI has become really active. There are a lot of surprise audits and raids being conducted at five-star restaurants with food safety officers visiting to check inventory, processes, hygiene levels and the licence to operate.

A lot of hotels and QSRs (quick service restaurants) are under the scanner of the regulator,” said Vinay Garodiya, executive director (fraud investigation and dispute services) at EY.

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