

Indian Railways Imposes ₹5.13 Crore Fine, Issues 54 Show-Cause Notices, Terminates 6 Contracts and Debars Defaulting Licensees for Food Quality and Hygiene Violations During the Last Three Years

Railways Strengthens Food Safety Through Modern Base Kitchens, QR Code on Packaging, CCTV Cameras in Base Kitchen, FSSAI Compliance and Multi-Layered Inspection Mechanism

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Indian Railways serve about 58 cr meals every year on an average. About only 0.0008% food quality related complaints are received on average. Based on complaints during the last three years, appropriate penal actions have been taken by IRCTC. Such actions include imposition of fines amounting to ₹5.13 crore, issuance of 54 show-cause notices, 06 termination of contracts and debarment of licensees for food quality and hygiene violations. The list of debarred licensees is published on the IRCTC's website.

Regular and surprise inspections are conducted by Railway/IRCTC officials, including Food Safety Officers, to ensure quality, hygiene, safety and regulatory compliance. These inspections cover key aspects such as food safety, staff deployment, equipment maintenance, cleanliness and adherence to prescribed standards while promoting best practices in food handling, storage and preparation.

Indian Railways continuously endeavour to provide good quality and hygienic food items to the travelling passengers as per the prescribed norms. Necessary steps are accordingly taken by Indian Railways from time to time to ensure the same. The following measures have been taken to improve quality, hygiene and food safety:

- Supply of meals from designated Base Kitchens.
- Commissioning of modern Base Kitchens at identified locations.
- Installation of CCTV Cameras in Base Kitchens for real time and better monitoring of food preparation.
- Shortlisting and use of popular and branded raw materials for food production.
- Deployment of Food Safety Supervisors at Base Kitchens to monitor food safety and hygienic practices.
- Deployment of on-board IRCTC supervisors on trains.

- Introduction of QR codes on meal packets supplied in trains to enhance food safety, transparency and passenger awareness. The QR code provides details regarding date of packing, name of the licensee and FSSAI license number, for information of passengers.
- Regular deep cleaning and periodical pest control in Base Kitchens and Pantry Cars.
- Mandatory Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) certification to ensure compliance with Food Safety Norms.
- Regular food sampling as a part of the monitoring mechanism to ensure quality of food on trains.
- Regular training is conducted by IRCTC to enhance the skills of catering staff, focusing on customer service areas, i.e., communication, courteous behaviour, service standards, personal grooming, and hygiene.
- Third Party Audit is done to examine hygiene and quality of food in Pantry Cars and Base Kitchens. Customer satisfaction survey is also conducted.

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This information was provided by the Union Minister for Railways, Information & Broadcasting and Electronics & Information Technology, Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw, in a reply to a question in Rajya Sabha today.

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