

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE**

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2225
TO BE ANSWERED ON 1ST AUGUST, 2025**

USE OF NON-PERMITTED FRUIT RIPENING AGENT AND SYNTHETIC COATING

2225. SHRI V K SREEKANDAN:

Will the **Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE** be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India has directed all States and Union Territories to intensify inspection and carry out targeted enforcement drives to curb the illegal use of non permitted fruit ripening agents and synthetic coatings and if so, the details thereof, State/UT-wise;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the use of calcium carbide, commonly referred to as masala for artificial ripening has been increased across the country and if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also true that use of Formalin to preserve fish and extend its shelf life poses serious health risks, including potential carcinogenicity and the same is being widely used across the country and if so, the details thereof; and

(d) whether the FSSAI has directed all the States and Union Territories to conduct frequent raids in fish markets and if so, the details thereof along with the number of such cases detected during the last two years, year-wise?

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
(SHRI PRATAPRAO JADHAV)**

(a) & (b): Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) through regular surveillance drives, regulatory inspections and random sampling of various food products monitors among other things use of non-permitted fruit ripening agents and synthetic coatings. These drives are conducted by the officials of Food Safety Departments of the respective States/ UTs and Regional offices of FSSAI.

Further, Sub Regulation 2.3.5 of Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restrictions On Sales) Regulations, 2011 Prohibits use of carbide gas in ripening of fruits which

states that “No person shall sell or offer or expose for sale or have in his premises for the purpose of sale under any description, fruits which have been artificially ripened by use of acetylene gas, commonly known as carbide gas. Sub regulation 2.3.6 of Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restrictions On Sales) Regulations, 2011 provides for Sale of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables which states that “The Fresh Fruits and Vegetables shall be free from rotting and free from coating of waxes, mineral oil and colours. Provided that fresh fruits may be coated with bees wax (white and yellow) or carnauba wax or shellac wax at level not exceeding Good Manufacturing Practices under proper label declaration as provided in Regulation 2.4.5 (44) of Food Safety and Standards (Packaging and Labelling) regulations, 2011.”

FSSAI requested all Commissioners of Food Safety of States/UTs and Regional Directors of FSSAI to intensify inspections and maintain strict vigilance over fruit markets/mandis within their respective jurisdictions. In the event of any violations, strict regulatory actions are enforced against the offenders in accordance with the provisions of the Act. Details of Enforcement Samples of Fresh Fruits Including Artificial Ripening analysed, found non-conforming and penal action taken during last 2 years are annexed at **Annexure-I**.

(c) & (d): The Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying has informed that to tackle the issue of using formalin in fish and fishery products intended for human consumption, the Department of Fisheries has advised the FSSAI to have joint task forces with the relevant States/UTs agencies and conduct regular inspections and test the fish and fishery products for formalin content using the ICAR-CIFT (Central Institute of Fisheries Technology, Kochi) test kits namely, ‘CIFTst Kit’ or other standards methods.

FSSAI requested all Commissioners of Food Safety of States/UTs and Regional Directors of FSSAI to conduct a nationwide drive on ‘Fish and fish products’ to check compliance with the standards specified under Food Safety and Standards Regulations including adulteration with Formalin within their respective jurisdictions. Details of Enforcement Samples and penal action taken during last 2 years are annexed at **Annexure II**.

Annexure I

Report of Enforcement Samples			
FRESH FRUITS INCLUDING ARTIFICIAL RIPENING			
F.Y.	No. of Samples Analysed	No. of non-conforming Samples	No. of Cases Launched
2023-24	726	76	25
2024-25	531	48	63

Annexure II

Report of Enforcement Samples			
FISH AND FISH PRODUCTS INCLUDING FORMALIN			
F.Y.	No. of Samples Analysed	No. of non- conforming Samples	No. of Cases Launched
2023-24	219	58	28
2024-25	126	9	56