

Food safety dept to set norms for manufacturing edible ice

Ice For Various Purposes Are Made At Same Location

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Thiruvananthapuram: The food safety department is gearing up to set norms for preparing edible ice at ice manufacturing units. This is being done after the food safety standards officials – who inspected ice manufacturing units in coastal areas – found that the ice manufactured for preserving fish and edible purposes were being made at same locations.

The inspection was conducted after suspicion arose that formalin (which is used to preserve fish) is being mixed with ice in some cases. “We are

MAINTAIN ISO STANDARDS

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planning to ensure some standards in the industry. During inspections, we found that ice for various purposes were manufactured at the same location and there is high chance that the ice varieties will get mixed up,” said food safety commissioner M G Rajamanickam, adding that industrial preparation of edible ice warrants ISO standards.

The examination of ice samples was initiated as a follow-up action after large quantities of fish that was being brought to the state from neighbouring states were found to be preserved in formalin. In one of the cases, the formalin testing kit – supplied by Central Institute of Fisheries Technology (CIFT) – showed that a sample contained formalin.

But, later it turned out to be negative when it was tested in a lab.

Rajamanickam said that this could have happened because the ice that was used in the market for preserving fish contained formalin. The usual practice is spraying it on the fish. Formalin is widely added as a preservative during transportation or storage of sea food due to its anti-microbial agent property. Repeated exposure to formalin can lead to cancer and other diseases in human beings.

In another case, an ice sample tested positive for ammonia said food safety officials. Exposure to high concentration of ammonia can cause burning sensation in eyes and respiratory tracts, resulting in blindness and lung damage. Food safety officials are now gearing up to examine fish samples by collecting them at fish landing centres along the coast.