

*News Release***Ontario Protecting Consumers from Price Gouging**

March 28, 2020

**Offenders face fines of up to \$500,000 for charging unfair prices on necessary goods**

TORONTO — Today, Premier Doug Ford announced new penalties to combat price gouging and hold offenders accountable for raising prices significantly on the necessary goods Ontarians need to protect themselves and their families from COVID-19.

Effective immediately, the government has issued an emergency order that retail businesses and individuals in Ontario cannot charge unfair prices for necessary goods.

Individual offenders can face a ticket of \$750, or, if summoned to court and convicted, could face a maximum penalty of a \$100,000 fine and one year in jail. If convicted, a company director or officer could face a fine of up to \$500,000 and up to a year in jail, and a corporation could face a fine of up to \$10 million.

"Starting today, we are taking serious steps to ensure our frontline workers, our families and our most vulnerable citizens have what they need to stay safe," said Premier Doug Ford. "We are putting an end to those trying to profit off of one of the darkest periods in our province's history. If you're engaging in price gouging on necessary goods, we are going to slap you with a ticket or you could face fines or jail time."

Necessary goods include:

- Masks and gloves used as personal protective equipment in relation to infections.
- Non-prescription medications for the treatment of the symptoms of the coronavirus.
- Disinfecting agents intended for cleaning and disinfecting objects or humans.
- Personal hygiene products, including soap products and paper products.

"As the COVID-19 outbreak continues to evolve provincially and globally, we are seeing a shortage of necessary goods available to the public, such as hand sanitizers and household cleaners," said Lisa Thompson, Minister of Government and Consumer Services. "We will not tolerate those taking advantage of these difficult times to charge unfair and unreasonable prices. It is not right and our government is taking swift and decisive action to put an end to it with extremely stiff penalties."

Consumers can report an individual who is price gouging by filing a complaint at 1-800-889-9768 between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday to Friday, or by [filing a report online](#).

## QUICK FACTS

- The Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act establishes the province's legal framework for managing emergencies.
- The order will be in effect for the duration of the declared provincial emergency.
- Under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act (EMCPA), the order prohibits persons, including retailers, from selling necessary goods for unconscionable prices. "Unconscionable prices" would be defined as a price that grossly exceeds the price at which similar goods are readily available to like consumers, which is consistent with well-established principles from the Consumer Protection Act.
- Violating the order can result in a ticket in the amount of \$750, or a charge under the EMCPA, with the possibility of a court imposed fine of up to \$100,000 and up to a year imprisonment for an individual. A director or officer of a corporation could face a fine of not more than \$500,000 and a term of imprisonment of not more than one year. In the case of a corporation, a fine of not more than \$10,000,000 may be imposed.
- Businesses and organizations who can supply emergency products and innovative solutions to support the government's response to COVID-19 can visit [Ontario.ca/OntarioTogether](https://ontario.ca/ontariotogether).
- The government is currently consulting on other ways to improve consumer protections in Ontario. Those interested can take part in a survey at the following link: [Share your feedback to help us improve the rules under Ontario's Consumer Protection Act](#).

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Visit Ontario's [website](#) to learn more about how the province continues to protect Ontarians from COVID-19.
- [Ontario Enacts Declaration of Emergency to Protect](#)
- [The 2019 Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

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