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OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL STATE OF FLORIDA

# Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

## VIDEO: AG Moody Activates Price Gouging Hotline




TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody today activated Florida's Price Gouging Hotline for consumers in multiple Florida counties. The opening of the hotline comes as Governor Ron DeSantis declares a state of emergency for counties in the path of Hurricane Dorian. Florida's Price Gouging Law only applies within the area of the declared state of emergency.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "Floridians in the projected path of this storm should take steps now to ensure they are prepared for a strike and the possibility of days without electricity. This means purchasing essential commodities such as food, water and fuel. I have activated Florida's Price Gouging Hotline in an effort to prevent gouging, so Floridians can afford essential items now. Please report gouging to my office by calling (866) 9NO-SCAM or download our new reporting app—NO SCAM."

For more information about the NO SCAM app, click here.

To download the Attorney General's Hurricane Preparedness Guide, click here.

State law prohibits excessive increases in the price of essential commodities, such as food, water, hotel rooms, ice, gasoline, lumber and equipment, needed as a direct result of an officially declared emergency. Anyone who suspects price gouging during this declared state of emergency should report it to the Attorney General's Office by using the NO SCAM app, or calling (866) 9NO-SCAM. The Attorney General's NO SCAM app can be downloaded for free through Apple and Android stores by searching NO SCAM.

For tips on reporting price gouging, click here.

Violators of the price gouging statute are subject to civil penalties of $1,000 per violation and up to a total of $25,000 for multiple violations committed in a single 24-hour period. In addition to the civil penalties for price gouging, state law criminalizes the sale of goods and services to the public without possession of a business tax receipt. Violators of the law can be charged with a second-degree misdemeanor.

Specifically, Florida Statute, Section 501.160, states in part that during a state of emergency, it is unlawful to sell, rent, offer to sell, or offer for rent essential commodities, dwelling units, or self-storage facilities for an amount that grossly exceeds the average price for that commodity during the 30 days before the declaration of the state of emergency.

For more information on price gouging, please click here.