

Tips for Avoiding Price Gouging and Gathering Gouging Evidence

The Florida Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division aggressively investigates allegations of price gouging and direct evidence of pricing information is a crucial component of the investigative process. If the price of an essential commodity represents a gross disparity from the average price charged 30 days before the declared state of emergency, or grossly exceeds the average market price for the area, then the price may be unlawful. See [501.160, Fla. Stat](#) for more details.

Before filing a price gouging complaint, try to gather as much information as safely possible. Below are some tips to help consumers know what evidence to capture and what to report:

- Take pictures of advertised prices, receipts, signs or price tags, and keep copies of any estimates, invoices, receipts or bills;
- If time and security permit, it may be helpful to identify the pricing of the same product sold by other sellers in the area;
- Compare products, noting similarities and differences, by recording the product name, brand, size/quantity, manufacturer, model number and price. Take pictures of the items if possible;
- Make a record of the name and address of the business or individual selling the more expensive commodity and of any others whose prices are being compared;
- Retain receipts of necessary items purchased from businesses you generally frequent, as these may provide better context when determining if the price of the item during a declared state of emergency represents a gross disparity from the average price charged 30 days before the declaration;
- When renting a room, keep copies and make note of advertised pricing, booking confirmations and final bill. Also, note the type of room and booking method; and
- For lumber purchases, it is important to note the size, grade, thickness and quality.

Report price gouging information to the Florida Attorney General's Office by downloading No Scam, a free app available for Android and Apple devices, which enables the user to report suspected price gouging with photos, documents and screen shots from a mobile device. Price gouging can also be reported online at MyFloridaLegal.com or by calling 1(866) 9NO-SCAM (1-866-966-7226). For more information about price gouging, click [here](#).

Preparing early for hurricane season and maintaining an up-to-date home emergency kit is a great way to avoid price gouging. Many of the least expensive supplies are the first items to run out, leaving only higher priced products available for purchase.