



QUESTIONS ABOUT PRICE GOUGING

What is price gouging?

Price gouging is the act of a business raising prices of needed products and services over 10% during a declared emergency.

Price gouging is prohibited and is governed by Penal Code 396 and the Los Angeles County Price Gouging Ordinance. For 30 days following the declaration of emergency, it is illegal for a person, contractor, or business to sell or offer to sell any food items or goods or service for a price of more than 10 percent above the price charged by that person or business immediately before the declaration of emergency was issued.

Typically, this statute applies for 30 days after an emergency declaration. However, the statute applies for 180 days for reconstruction services

and emergency cleanup services. State and local municipalities may extend the effective period of the statute beyond these timeframes.

WHEN A DISASTER STRIKES DON'T GET OVERCHARGED

If the government declares an emergency, increasing the price of goods and services 10% or more may be price gouging.



When does California's anti-price gouging statute apply?

The statute applies immediately after the President of the United States, the Governor of California, or city or county executive officer declares an emergency resulting from any natural or manmade disaster, such as an earthquake, flood, fire, riot, storm or medical outbreaks or epidemics.

A copy of the emergency declaration is available here:

<https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/3.4.20-Coronavirus-SOE-Proclamation.pdf>

Who is subject to the statute?

Individuals, businesses, and other entities must comply with the statute.

What goods and services does the anti-price-gouging statute cover?

The statute applies to the following major necessities: lodging (including rental housing, hotels and motels); food and drink (including food and drink for animals); emergency supplies such as water, flashlights, radios, batteries, candles, blankets, soap, diapers, temporary shelters, tape, toiletries, plywood, nails, and hammers; and medical supplies such as prescription and nonprescription medications, bandages, gauze, isopropyl alcohol, and antibacterial products.

It also applies to other goods and services including: home heating oil; building materials, including lumber, construction tools, and windows; transportation; freight; storage services; gasoline and other motor fuels; and repair and reconstruction services.

What do I do if I think a business is price gouging?

If you believe that you have been a victim of price gouging or you suspect a business is price gouging, contact the Los Angeles County Department of Consumer and Business Affairs at (800) 593-8222.

CONSUMER PROTECTIONS FOR TRAVELERS

I don't want to travel because of coronavirus. Can I get a refund from my airline or cruise line?

Contact the airline or cruise line directly to find out what their policy is on cancellations. DCBA cannot intervene in company policies regarding refunds.

Cancelling flights to destinations where there are no travel restrictions will likely result in paying the full penalty.

Passengers booked on to a flight that has been cancelled by the airline because it no longer wishes to operate the flight, are entitled to a full refund. However, you will likely not be able to recoup "consequential" losses.

In some cases, trip cancellation insurance can protect your financial investment in a trip if you need to change your itinerary in the event of an international outbreak.

Trip cancellation insurance might help ensure you are able to make a last-minute cancellation or change your itinerary in the event of an international outbreak. Be sure to check the fine print to see if your coverage includes disease outbreaks at intended travel destinations and what any restrictions might be.



Will my credit card travel insurance cover any trip cancellations or changes from coronavirus?

It depends, the question is whether you choose to cancel a trip, or if you have no control over the decision and the choice is made for you.

Credit cards will cover a canceled trip when you meet "covered situations" which typically include:

- Accidental bodily injury, loss of life or sickness experienced by you, a traveling companion or an immediate family member
- Severe weather that prevents the start or continuation of a trip
- Terrorist attack or hijacking

What is "cancel for any reason" (CFRAR) coverage?

If you are concerned that the coronavirus may affect your travel, it is recommended to purchase "cancel for any reason" (CFAR) coverage.

Cancelling a trip out of worry or fear is not enough to be reimbursed for a canceled trip.

What are the eligibility requirements for CFAR coverage?

CFAR insurance must be purchased within 21 days (sometimes even within seven to 14) of paying for your trip.

You also cannot cancel any later than 48 hours before your departure and will only be reimbursed up to 75 percent of your prepaid, nonrefundable trip cost. **States are responsible for regulating U.S. travel insurance and will vary state to state**

CFAR coverage policies are typically expensive and might add about 50 percent to the price of a basic policy.

A typical travel insurance policy does not cover a traveler's decision to cancel a trip due to fear or worry about visiting an area affected by the coronavirus.

CORONAVIRUS FAQs



AVOIDING SCAMS

CORONAVIRUS ONLINE SCAMS

Scammers are taking advantage of fears surrounding coronavirus. They're setting up websites to sell bogus products, and using fake emails, texts, and social media posts as a ruse to take your money and get your personal information. They are forging emails mentioning the outbreak that appear to be from business partners or public institutions to try to get users to open the messages, unleashing malware.

How do I know if a coronavirus email is a scam?

Follow normal online tips to protect your money and identity. Most important, do not click on links or respond to an e-mail that you do not recognize.

The emails and posts may be promoting awareness and prevention tips or fake information about cases in your neighborhood. They also may be asking you to donate to victims, offering advice on unproven treatments, or contain malicious email attachments.

SCAMS ABOUT CORONAVIRUS VACCINES AND CURES

There is currently no vaccine and no specific treatment to prevent or treat a coronavirus infection. Scientists are working on these issues. However, scammers are taking advantage of fear and misinformation to take people's money.

Can I pay to be on a list to be the first to receive a vaccine?

No. Do not give money to anyone that claims a payment will put you on a list to fast-track receiving a vaccination.

There are no lists being generated for people to receive vaccinations.

When a vaccine does become available, your medical provider will notify you.



Should I buy a product that claims to cure coronavirus?

Be wary of anyone touting any type of medical miracle or holistic cures. Using questionable and untested products will cost you money and potentially be dangerous to your health.

Think twice before spending money on a product that claims to cure a wide range of diseases.

Be suspect of products that provide only patient testimonials as evidence of their effectiveness.

Patient testimonials can be made up and embellished, and they are no substitute for true scientific evidence.

Before using any product that makes these claims, consult with your doctor or health care professional to ensure it is safe to use.

How can I buy a kit to test myself at home for coronavirus?

Home testing kits for some common medical issues are available at many retailers. However, **there are no home test kits for coronavirus.**

Be wary of the unapproved or fraudulent test kits being marketed on the Internet, in magazines, and elsewhere.

Patients who suspect they may have the virus or that they may be infected should consult with a physician on the best way to provide a specimen for testing.

CORONAVIRUS FAQs



Should I invest in a company that's working on a coronavirus vaccine or cure?

Be alert to "investment opportunities" or offers to crowd fund for a cure. If you see one of these promotions, ignore it.

The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) is warning people about online promotions, including on social media, claiming that the products or services of publicly-traded companies can prevent, detect, or cure coronavirus. The promotions claim that the stock of these companies will dramatically increase in value as a result.

Keep in mind that contributing to a crowd fund will not guarantee any results and contributions to a crowd fund may not be refundable.

CHARITY SCAMS

Charities help communities in their time of need and representatives may ask for donations from people to help fund their activities. However, scammers may try to take advantage of the kindness of others for their own benefit.

How do I know my donation is going to a real charity?

In California, all legitimate charities and professional fundraisers must be registered with the California State Attorney General, Charitable Trusts Section. This office regulates charitable organizations to ensure donations contributed by Californians are not stolen or misused through fraud.

To ensure the charity you are donating to is legitimate, use the Attorney General's Registry Verification Search [here](#). This tool allows you to search the files of the Registry of Charitable Trusts. Do your homework when it comes to donations, whether through charities or crowd funding sites. Don't let anyone rush you into making a donation. Do not pay donations with gift cards or by wiring money.

MORE INFO ON SCAMS

Want more information on the latest scams we're seeing? Sign up for our [consumer alerts](#). If you come across any suspicious claims, report them to the FTC at ftc.gov/complaint.

OTHER RESOURCES

Los Angeles County Resources:

- Los Angeles County Department of Public Health
<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/>
- If you have general questions about coronavirus disease, call 2-1-1 to speak to someone or visit www.211LA.org

Additional Resources:

- California Department of Public Health (CDPH, State)
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/nCOV2019.aspx>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, National)
<http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/novel-coronavirus-2019.html>
- World Health Organization (WHO, International) <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, National)
<http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/novel-coronavirus-2019.html>
- AARP Official Site <https://www.aarp.org/travel/travel-tips/safety/info-2020/insurance-coronavirus-coverage.html>
- Smart Traveler Enrollment Program <https://step.state.gov/>