



Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Office of the Attorney General

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For Immediate Release

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PRICE FREEZE IN EFFECT FOR THE CNMI

Office of the Attorney General, Saipan – Super Typhoon Yutu struck the Commonwealth on October 25, 2018. Consumers should be aware, and retailers are on notice, that it is illegal to engage in price gouging following a major disaster.

The Consumer Protection Act makes it unlawful for businesses to engage in price gouging. Price gouging occurs when a business increases prices based solely on a shortage of goods caused by a natural disaster or any other emergency. The Office of the Attorney General will prosecute, both criminally and civilly, any business that engages in price gouging.

The Governor declared a price freeze pursuant to the Consumer Disaster Price Freeze Act on October 27, 2018, which will be in effect until he rescinds all declarations of emergency, disaster or price freeze.

The price of the following items are frozen:

1. Gasoline, kerosene, diesel fuel, natural gas, and all other chemical fuels, whether in gaseous, liquid, or solid form;
2. All foods and foodstuffs, including water, bottled water, beverages, and ice;
3. All clothing;
4. Flashlights, lamps, lanterns, candles, light bulbs, and other means of illumination;
5. Generators, cables, wires, electrical batteries of every sort, and similar equipment for the generation and/or transmission of electrical power;
6. All appliances used in the storage and/or preparation of food, including, but not limited to, stoves, barbecue grilles, ovens, refrigerators, and coolers;
7. Tools typically used for construction, ground clearing, or home repairs, whether electrically powered, chemically powered, or manual, including, but not limited to, saws, machetes, hammers, drills, shovels, rakes, and brooms.
8. All bedding items, including pillows, futons and blankets.

It is illegal for any person or business to raise the price of any of the above-listed items while a price freeze is in effect. A violation of the Consumer Disaster Price Freeze Act is punishable by a \$10,000 fine and one year of imprisonment for each violation.

Please contact the Office of the Attorney General if you observe price gouging. For more information contact Assistant Attorney General Bob Pickett, Consumer Counsel of the Office of the Attorney General, at 237-7500, or email him at consumer_counsel@cnmioag.org. Additional information can be found at www.cnmioag.org under Consumer Protection.

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