

# Office of the Hunterdon County Prosecutor

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[www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/prosecutor.htm](http://www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/prosecutor.htm)

## **MEDIA RELEASE – APRIL 3, 2020**

### **HUNTERDON COUNTY PROSECUTOR SAYS COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS BEING ENFORCED, WARNS OF SCAMS, PRICE GOUGING**

The public should be aware that law enforcement is actively enforcing COVID-19 state directives to not gather, avoid traveling, and to practice social distancing, and should also be on the alert for COVID-19 scams and price gouging, Acting Hunterdon County Prosecutor Michael J. Williams stated in a public notice issued on April 2, 2020.

The notice from the Prosecutor's Office states that Executive Orders issued by Governor Phil Murphy, Directives from Attorney General Gurbir Grewal, and Administrative Orders from State Police Superintendent Colonel Patrick J. Callahan, have the force of law and are being actively enforced by state, county and local law enforcement.

"We know these rules are creating hardships; however, Hunterdon County residents must comply with the mandates."

Orders closing non-essential businesses and for the public not to gather are designed to protect the public health during the COVID-19 pandemic. We encourage everyone not to put yourself, your family or friends, or law enforcement officers tasked with enforcing these rules at risk," Williams stated.

Williams added, "The public must also be aware that unscrupulous types may try to take advantage of the crisis to defraud them. If you believe that this has occurred, please contact your local police department, the State Police, or the Hunterdon County Prosecutor's Office (908) 788-1129.

Another unfortunate result of the COVID-19 pandemic is 'price gouging' on the cost of needed products. Please be vigilant for price increases when looking to purchase items such as surgical masks, gloves, sanitizing products, gas, and other necessities."

The Prosecutor's Office warns that New Jersey law prohibits excessive price increases during a declared state of emergency, or for 30 days after the declaration ends. Such price increases are defined as those that are more than 10% above the price that merchandise sells for in the normal course of business prior to the state of emergency.

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Anyone who believes that such illegal practices are occurring is urged to contact the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs and filing a complaint at [www.NJConsumerAffairs.gov](http://www.NJConsumerAffairs.gov) or calling (973) 504-6240; please leave your name, contact information, nature of the complaint, and the name and location of the business.

“Our law enforcement officers continue to be out on the streets responding to calls for help and protecting the public, at risk to themselves. We are thankful and proud of their service. We ask everyone to cooperate with law enforcement authorities and abide by the new temporary restrictions. We will all be better off for it,” Williams concluded.

Links to Executive Orders during the COVID-19 outbreak are provided below:

Governor’s Executive Orders- [https://nj.gov/infobank/eo/056murphy/approved/eo\\_archive.html](https://nj.gov/infobank/eo/056murphy/approved/eo_archive.html)

AG’s Directives- <https://www.nj.gov/oag/dcj/directiv.htm>

Anonymous tips can be submitted by calling Crime Stoppers at 1-800-321-0010, going online at [www.CrimeStoppersHunterdon.com](http://www.CrimeStoppersHunterdon.com) or through the free “P3 Tips” smartphone app. All tips are anonymous and kept confidential.

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