

Cassels

Ontario Issues Emergency Order Prohibiting Price Gouging of Necessary Goods

March 30, 2020

On March 28, 2020, the Government of Ontario issued an emergency order prohibiting retailers and individuals from charging unfair prices for necessary goods that Ontarians need to protect themselves from COVID-19. The necessary goods on the list include:

- Masks and gloves used as personal protective equipment in relation to infections.
- Non-prescription medications for the treatment of the symptoms of the coronavirus.
- Disinfecting agents intended for cleaning and disinfecting objects or humans.
- Personal hygiene products, including soap products and paper products.

This order is made under the Ontario *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* and will be in force for the duration of the emergency and prohibits the sale of necessary goods for unconscionable prices. “Unconscionable prices” would be defined as a price that grossly exceeds the price at which similar goods are readily available to consumers.

Individual offenders caught price gouging can face a \$750 fine, or, if summoned to court and convicted, can face a fine of up to \$100,000 and one year in jail. Officers and directors of companies can face a fine of up to \$500,000 and up to a year in jail and corporations could face fines of up to \$10 million.

[More information can be found here.](#)

The author of this article gratefully acknowledges the contributions of articling student Reza Sarsangi.

[Additional resources related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic can be found here.](#)

This publication is a general summary of the law. It does not replace legal advice tailored to your specific circumstances.