

# Anti-Gouging Law in Effect Following Winter Storms

Iowa's severe winter weather causes not only snow, ice, and wind but another undesirable element also appears - the scammer. Iowa's Attorney General, Tom Miller, is reminding Iowans that price gouging is considered an unfair practice under the Iowa Consumer Fraud Act when a disaster declaration is in effect for a county.

Iowa's anti-price-gouging rule is in effect for Adair, Audubon, Carroll, Cass, Clarke, Crawford, Harrison, Mills, Monona, Montgomery, Page, Pottawattamie, Sac, Shelby, and Taylor counties. The rule was adopted in 1993 following widespread flooding when exorbitant prices were charged even for port-a-potties.

According to the Attorney General, price gouging is the practice of taking advantage of disaster victims by substantially raising the prices, without justification, for needed goods or services. In other words, it occurs when the price is raised above what is normal immediately prior to the disaster.

Price gouging covers, but is not limited, to water, food, medicines, and materials, goods, or services needed for clean up or repair. Complaints can be taken to local authorities or to the Attorney General's Office -- 515-281-5926, or toll-free at 1-888-777-4590.