



To ensure that District residents know their rights during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, here is important information about protections for D.C. consumers, workers, and tenants. For the latest information, visit oag.dc.gov/coronavirus.

PROTECT YOURSELF FROM SCAMS AND FRAUD

Scammers may attempt to defraud consumers by selling products that are ineffective at preventing the coronavirus and spreading misinformation through social media and other channels. Other scammers may pretend to solicit donations to help coronavirus victims, but instead are stealing consumers' money and personal information. Here are some tips to protect yourself from these scams:



- **Beware of emails claiming to be from the CDC or experts saying that they have information about the virus.** For the most up-to-date information about the Coronavirus and prevention tips, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO).
- **Consult a medical professional for questions about prevention and treatment.** Ignore offers for vaccinations and be wary of advertisements for cures or treatments for the disease. While the best way to prevent this illness is to avoid exposure to the virus, the CDC and the DC Department of Health have tips to prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses.
- **Do your own research before donating to a charity.** Remember that an organization may not be authentic just because it uses words like "CDC" or "government" in its name or has reputable looking seals or logos on its materials. There are a number of independent online sources you can use to verify that a charity is legitimate. Use OAG's free resource to learn more tips on how to avoid falling victim to charity scams.
- **Report scams to the Office of the Attorney General (OAG):** If you believe you have been the victim of a scam, contact OAG by calling **202-442-9828**, emailing consumer.protection@dc.gov, or submitting a complaint online at oag.dc.gov/ConsumerComplaint.

REPORT PRICE GOUGING

The District's price gouging consumer protection law is now in effect during the state of emergency. District law prevents any individual or company from overcharging for similar goods or services that were sold in the 90 days before the Mayor's emergency declaration (e.g., overcharging for products such as sanitizer, tissue paper, cleaning and disinfecting products, among others). Individuals and companies that break the law are subject to \$5,000 fines per violation and the revocation of licenses and permits.



- **Report price gouging:** If you believe you have been overcharged, you can report price gouging to OAG by calling **202-442-9828**, emailing Consumer.Protection@dc.gov, submitting a complaint online at oag.dc.gov/ConsumerComplaint.



KNOW YOUR RIGHTS TO PAID SICK LEAVE

The District's Sick and Safe Leave Act (SSLA) requires most employers to provide employees with paid sick leave, which allows workers to take paid leave from work due to illness. Here are some answers to frequently asked questions about the SSLA:



- **How do employees earn paid sick leave?** Employees earn paid sick leave based on hours worked. The rate at which paid sick leave is earned depends on the size of the employer and is summarized in the table below:

If the employer has:	Employees earn:	Maximum paid sick days earned per year
100 or more employees	1 hour per 37 hours worked	7 days
25 to 99 employees	1 hour per 43 hours worked	5 days
Less than 25 employees	1 hour per 87 hours worked	3 days

- **When can employees begin using paid sick leave?** Employees can begin using paid sick leave after working for their employer for 90 days.
- **What can employees use paid sick leave for?** Employees may take paid sick leave due to physical or mental illness. The SSLA also permits employees to take paid sick leave for other purposes as well, such as caring for family members suffering from physical or mental illness and seeking medical diagnosis or care (including preventive care).
- **What other rights do I have under SSLA?** Paid sick leave is a right and employers cannot discharge, demote, or discipline employees for taking paid sick leave that they have earned.
- **How do I report violations of the SSLA?** If you believe your paid sick leave rights are being violated, contact the Office of the Attorney General by calling **202-442-9828**. Workers can learn about their rights under District law and how they can get help if their rights are being violated at: <https://oag.dc.gov/workers-rights>.

UNDERSTAND YOUR CIVIL RIGHTS PROTECTIONS

District businesses should treat consumers and employees fairly despite the ongoing public health crisis.



- **District law requires employers to provide reasonable accommodations to workers with disabilities.** For examples, employees that request to work from home because of a medical condition that weakens their immune system should be accommodated to the extent possible.
- **District law prohibits businesses from discriminating against consumers and employees.** For example, District businesses cannot discriminate against people of specific racial groups or people from specific foreign countries based on stereotypes about their race or national origin.
- **Report discrimination:** If you experience discrimination of any kind, report it to OAG by calling **202-727-3400**, emailing OAGCivilRights@dc.gov, or filling out our online form. You can also file a complaint with D.C. Office of Human Rights through their online civil rights complaint form at ohr.dc.gov.



NEW LOCAL EMERGENCY PROTECTIONS FOR DC RESIDENTS

Under new legislation passed by the D.C. Council, tenants, workers, and consumers have new protections during public health emergencies:



Protections for Tenants

- Landlords may not file court actions to evict tenants during the public health emergency and for 30 days afterward.
- Landlords may not charge late fees for any month in which the Mayor has declared a public health emergency.
- Landlords may not increase rent for any month in which the Mayor has declared a public health emergency.
- If a landlord gets relief from paying their mortgage, their tenants' rent needs to be deferred in the same amount.
- For one year after the public health emergency ends, the landlord is required to enter into a repayment agreement, based on financial need, with for past due rent and not report the overdue rent to credit agencies.
- Landlords need to refund, for the period of the public health emergency, fees charged for amenities (e.g. fitness center, business center, balconies, laundry room, swimming pool, childcare center, playground and community room).
- The owner, or representative of the owner, of a housing accommodation shall clean common areas of the housing accommodation on a regular basis, including surfaces that are regularly touched, such as doors, railings, seating, and the exterior of mailboxes.

Protections for Consumers

- Utility companies may not disconnect your gas, water, or electric service.
- Cable, internet, and broadband providers may not disconnect, suspend, or otherwise degrade services during the emergency.
- Companies and individuals may not illegally stockpile essential items, such as sanitizer. Violating this stockpiling provision will result in a \$5,000 fine per violation.

Protections for Workers

- You may be eligible for up to 80 hours of paid sick leave at your regular rate of pay if you work for an employer with 50-499 employees.
- If eligible, you may take emergency paid sick leave to obtain a medical diagnosis, quarantine, care for an individual who is self-isolating because of diagnosis or symptoms, or to care for a child if school or place of care is closed.

Protections Against Debt Collection

During the state of emergency and for 60 days after the emergency ends, debt collectors are not allowed to:

- File any new collection lawsuits.
- Repossess vehicles or begin new actions to garnish wages.
- Seek to collect debt from consumers at their home, workplace, or in public.
- Threaten to take file lawsuits, repossess vehicles, or visit consumers.



PREVENT THE SPREAD OF CORONAVIRUS

Follow these tips from the Centers for Disease Control and the DC Department of Health to prevent the spread of germs and the coronavirus.



- Stay home unless performing essential errands
- Keep 6 feet away from others in public
- Wear a mask on essential errands
- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds multiple times a day. An alcohol-based hand sanitizer can be used if soap and water are not available
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Stay home when feeling sick
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces
- If you experience COVID-19 symptoms, please seek medical care

For the latest health and safety updates from District government during the public health crisis, visit coronavirus.dc.gov.