



San Diego County SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

NEWS RELEASE INFORMATION SHEET

Subject: Price Gouging Operation
Date of Release: March 18, 2020
Time of Release: 12:00 p.m.
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SYNOPSIS:

In response to the State of Emergency being declared in California, deputies from the Fallbrook Sheriff's Substation conducted an enforcement operation targeting persons involved in online price-gouging activity. Deputies monitored multiple online websites and applications involved in peer-to-peer merchandise sales and identified a large number of persons selling hygiene products, cleaning supplies/solutions, and personal protective equipment at exorbitant prices. These parties intended to maximize financial gain during the emergency with merchandise being offered for sale upward of twenty times its regular retail price.

Operating in a plain-clothes capacity, deputies arranged to meet and purchase the excessively priced goods. After the transaction was completed, deputies placed the seller under arrest for being in violation of section 396(a) of the California Penal Code. California Law prohibits excessive and unjustified increases in prices for essential consumer goods and services during a declared emergency. A violation of this section is a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment in a county jail for a period not exceeding one year, or by a fine of not more than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000), or by both that fine and imprisonment.

Photos of the items purchased and names of those arrested are on page 2 of this news release or on Twitter @SDSheriff.

During this pandemic, scammers are trying to take advantage of the misinformation and fear surrounding the public health crisis. Be aware of the COVID-19 scams circulating across the country.

- Coronavirus cure? Not so fast. – there are currently no products known to treat or cure coronavirus
- Door to door scammers offering fake decontamination or coronavirus testing services
- Scammers urging people to invest in new stocks related to the disease

Call Crime Stoppers at (888) 580-8477 with information and you will remain anonymous. You can also download the P3 anonymous tip app. You may be eligible for up to a \$1,000 reward for information that leads to an arrest.



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Deceptive online ads and malicious email campaigns
Unsolicited medical advisories with links or attachments
Phone calls or emails asking for donations, your social security number, banking information or credit card number

The Sheriff's Department continues to protect the public from fraud. For resources on how to avoid becoming a victim, visit sdsheriff.net/financial.

Eight people were arrested during the operation. They were cited and released.

Dale Gottschalk (10/27/1966) - unincorporated El Cajon

David Gold (04/21/1966) - Escondido

David Noriani (06/21/1984) – San Diego

Tony Dai Ta (05/08/1966) - Poway

Chasity Lynn Long-Ross (12/12/1974) – San Marcos

Richard McCake Simpson (02/11/1973) – Vista

Spencer Ryan Silva (08/11/1993) – Escondido

Eric Marc Duran (06/20/1961) – Rainbow

