

## Face mask supply coming as we speak: Chong

By Nazmi Suhaimi - January 31, 2020

**KUCHING:** The public is assured that the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry (KPDNHEP) are pulling out all stops to ensure that there is ample supply of face masks nationwide.

Its deputy minister Chong Chieng Jen said that the ministry's officers are currently in discussions with local manufacturers to increase the supply of face masks in the market.

He issued a stern warning to retailers who are raising the prices of face masks which have been listed as controlled items.

"We will do our best to get enough supply to meet the sudden huge surge in demand. We are now caught in a global crisis. Let us all work together to get out of it," he said in a press conference at the ministry's office here on Thursday.

Chong appealed to manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers to not take advantage of the coronavirus crisis to increase the prices of face masks and hand sanitisers for extra profit.



**Chong shows a three-ply head strap surgical mask which is a controlled item during a media conference at the ministry's office. Photo: Mohd Alif Noni**

"While I am confident that most traders are ethical, I do not discount the fact that there may be some black sheep among them who will do anything for quick profit," he said.

He urged the public to report retailers who sell the five types of face masks above their maximum prices.



The retail price for a one-ply ear loop surgical mask is set at RM7 per box while the two-ply ear loop surgical mask is at RM10 per box or 20 sen per unit.

The three ply ear loop surgical mask is set at 80 sen per unit which is the same for the head strap variant. Meanwhile, N95 respirator is priced at RM6 per unit.

“Our enforcement officers will take immediate action upon receiving such reports; meanwhile, our 2,300 enforcement officers and 1000 price checkers nationwide will also be carrying out inspection on outlets selling these items.

“While the other types of face masks are not listed in the Price Control items, they are still subject to the Price Control and Anti-Profiteering Act 2011,” he said.

Upon conviction, a person shall be liable to a fine not exceeding RM100,000 or imprisonment not exceeding three years, whereas a corporation is liable to a fine of not exceeding RM500,000.

It is understood that ten reports have been lodged as of press time. Chong said enforcement officers found that retailers are still selling the face masks below the maximum prices.

