



Stern action against traders who hike price of face masks: MDTCA

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PUTRAJAYA: Stern action will be taken by the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs (MDTCA) against traders taking advantage of the current outbreak of the 2019 novel coronavirus by indiscriminately increasing the price of face masks.

The ministry's secretary-general, Datuk Muez Abd Aziz, in a statement here today, said face masks are an item under the price control list, where the maximum ceiling price has been fixed on five types of face masks under the Price control and Anti-Profitteering Act 2011.

Legal action could be taken against the errant traders where they would face a maximum fine of RM100,000, or imprisonment for up to three years, or both, if found guilty, while companies could be fined up to RM500,000 or compound up to RM250,000, if found guilty.

Muez said the price of the face mask or surgical mask various, depending on the type.

The first three types are with earlobes, with the one-layered one at RM5 per box at wholesale price (retail price is RM7 per box).

The other is the two-layered mask, which is sold for RM8 per box (wholesale price) or RM10 per box at retail price or 20 sen per piece, he said, adding that the third type is the three-layered surgical mask which is sold for RM25 per box or 80 sen per piece.

The two other types of surgical mask are the three-layered hijab friendly one, which is RM30 per box or 80 sen per piece and the N95 face mask which can be bought for RM100 per box or RM6 per piece.

Muez said it should be noted that besides the five types of face masks where the ceiling price has been fixed, the ministry also has the power to take action under the Price Control and Anti-Profitteering Act 2011 against those who indiscriminately increased the price of other types of face masks.

He said the ministry would continue its ongoing monitoring by the 2,300 enforcement officers and would take stern action against errant traders. - *Bernama*