

Authorities: Panic buying now under control, food supplies sufficient during MCO

Wednesday, 08 Apr 2020 04:33 PM MYT
BY OPALYN MOK



People are seen stocking up on food and other goods during the panic buying at a supermarket in George Town March 17, 2020. — Picture by Sayuti Zainudin

GEORGE TOWN, April 8 — There was minimal panic buying recorded in Penang during the movement control order (MCO), with sufficient food supplies and increasing supply of face masks, the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Department (KPDNHEP) announced today.

The department's Penang director Mohd Ridzuan Ab Ghapar said they conducted checks on a total 702 premises including supermarkets, hypermarkets, mini markets, wet markets and sundry shops between March 18 and April 7.

"From that number, we found that there were panic buying at 48 premises, at 6.8 per cent, in the early phase of the MCO, but the situation is now under control," he said.

He said they also found food supplies such as vegetables, chicken, fruits, cooking oil, flour, sugar and other necessities were sufficient in all the premises.

"Therefore, we would like to advise the public not to panic buy and hoard supplies as there is sufficient food for everyone," he said.

As for face masks, initially only 16 premises out of 343 had supply of face masks in February and by March, only about 21 premises had supply.

"Between April 1 and 7, we checked 93 premises and found that 33 premises now have face mask supplies," he said.

He said face mask supplies are expected to slowly come in as normal from this month onwards due to the revision of maximum price for the item from 80 sen to RM1.50 each and a ban on export of the masks from March 20 onwards.

"We have also received 21 reports on face masks pricing and have taken action under the Price Control and Anti-Profiteering Act 2011 and Control of Supplies Act 1961," he said.

As for hand sanitiser supplies, he said stock for this item is readily available at more places.

The department had already received five reports on increased pricing of hand sanitisers and actions were taken against those involved.

Additionally, the department had also received 27 reports on price increases on vegetables, eggs, rice, pork and other items.

"We are investigating these under the Price Control and Anti-Profiteering Act 2011 and all traders are advised to be ethical and not take advantage by profiteering during this period," he said.

He said items such as eggs, bread, rice vermicelli, sardines, flour and some other items may be facing some supply issues due to high demand.

"Suppliers have maximised their production and these supplies are enough, there are only issues when the supplies were delivered late due to extraordinarily high demands," he said.

Since March 18, the Penang KPDNHEP has set up Operations Centre in each branch, at the headquarters in the northeast district on the island, at Central Seberang Perai and North Seberang Perai.

The operations centres are open from 8am to 6pm daily.

Ridzuan said the department officers are regularly conducting checks on food supplies and price trends of basic necessities such as flour, sugar, cooking oil, rice, vegetables, fruits, chicken, eggs, tissue paper and others.

He said the public can make enquiries or submit their complains to any of the Operations Centre by calling: 04-2552456 (island), 04-3801700 (SPS & SPT) and 04-5751703 (SPU).

Consumers can also submit official complains at eaduan.kpdnhep.gov.my/eaduan or by sending WhatsApp to 019-2794317.

<https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2020/04/08/authorities-panic-buying-now-under-control-food-supplies-sufficient-during/1854723>