

# State: Watch for price gouging tied to Alberto

By [Jamie Henline](#) ([Contact](#))

Monday, June 12, 2006

State Attorney General Charlie Crist is urging residents to be on the lookout for price gouging or building repair and cleanup scams as Tropical Storm Alberto heads for Florida.

## WEBIFIED

- **VODCAST:** [Watch 'Studio 55' for expanded coverage](#)

## 2006 HURRICANE SEASON

- **3D RENDERING:** [Path of Tropical Storm Alberto](#)
- **PODCAST:** [Hear an in-depth report about how officials and residents are dealing with Tropical Storm Alberto.](#)
- **STUDIO 55:** [Watch Studio 55's coverage of the storm](#)
- **PHOTO GALLERY:** [Tropical Storm Alberto](#)
- **RELATED:** [AP: Alberto falls short of hurricane status](#)
- **RELATED:** [Alberto brings little more than a few days of rain to region \(6/14/06\)](#)
- **RELATED:** [Weather experts: Alberto was never 'a serious threat' \(6/14/06\)](#)
- **LATEST:** [Current conditions and the forecast](#)
- **RADAR:** [Florida radar image](#)
- **WEB CAMS:** [Southwest Florida web cams](#)
- **TIDES:** [Get local tide information](#)
- **TROPICAL STORM ALBERTO:** [Get more information about Tropical Storm Alberto in our special section](#)
- **HURRICANE WILMA:** [View videos, photos and more stories about Hurricane Wilma in our special section](#)
- **HURRICANE GUIDE 2006:** [Take a look at our special section and extended coverage on the new storm season](#)
- **EXPANDED COVERAGE:** [Read more hurricane stories](#)

According to state law, price gouging occurs when a commodity -- such as food, water, gasoline, ice, lumber or equipment needed as a result of an officially declared emergency -- rises steeply in price during the 30 days immediately following an emergency.

Gov. Jeb Bush today officially declared a state of emergency due to Alberto, the first tropical storm of the year.

Price gougers can be charged \$1,000 per violation in civil penalties, up to a total of \$25,000 for multiple violations in a single 24-hour period, says a press release from the attorney general's office.

During the past two hurricane seasons, the attorney general's office has conducted thousands of investigations into price gouging complaints, which led to 83 formal investigations and 17 price gouging lawsuits against hotels, generator businesses, tree removal companies and other business, according to a press release. So far, the attorney general has recovered more than \$1.8 million in restitution or reimbursements from settlements for consumers, the release says.

Those who suspect price gouging should call the attorney general's hotline at 1-866-9-NO-SCAM (1-866-966-7226).

A law enacted last year also criminalizes the sale of goods and services to the public without an occupational license. Anyone violating the law can be charged with a second-degree misdemeanor.

*Find additional coverage on today's 'Studio 55' podcast and in Tuesday's Daily News.*