



JANUARY- MARCH 2021, ISSUE 3

CONSUMER MATTERS



\$21.9-M SECURED ON BEHALF OF CONSUMERS

The Consumer Affairs Commission continues to resolve complaints in the marketplace. During the 2020/2021 Financial Year (April 1, 2020–March 31, 2021), the Commission handled **1,851** complaint cases of which, **1,454** were resolved - **80.11%** resolution rate.

In resolving these complaints, a total sum of **\$21.9 Million** was secured in compensation on behalf of consumers. The top three categories which recorded the largest number of complaints during the period were **Electrical, Equipment & Appliances** with **30.92%**, followed by **Utilities** with **19.08%** while **Other Services** was next with **15.10%**.

The Commission also handled 638 requests for advice during the period.

IN THIS E- NEWSLETTER

World Consumer
Rights Day 2021- 2

CAC Jamaica App - 3

Consumer Alert - 4

CAC Live - 5

Hurricane Season
Preparation - 6

Testimonials - 7

Social Media - 8

WORLD CONSUMER RIGHTS DAY 2021




THE COVID
CONSCIOUS

CONSUMER: FOOD
SECURITY, WASTE

DISPOSAL AND

MONEY

MANAGEMENT




CONSUMER AFFAIRS COMMISSION
An Agency of the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce
"Protecting Your Rights, Securing Our Future"

World Consumer Rights Day 2021

The Sustainable Consumer

#CovidConsciousConsumer



Honourable Audley Shaw CD, MP.
Minister of Industry,
Investment and Commerce

Today, Jamaica joins with the rest of the world in observation of World Consumer Rights Day. Now more than ever, in light of the Covid pandemic, I encourage us all as consumers, to embrace sustainability in all our endeavours. It is only by taking personal responsibility in the daily choices we make that we can control the outcomes. By this intention, we each can influence policy by demanding change and thereby contribute to the social, physical and economic environment we desire to live, work and raise families locally and globally.

#FoodSecurity#WasteDisposal#MoneyManagement

Let the change begin with you!

1. Start your backyard garden.
2. Choose carefully how you dispose of your waste.
3. Seek information on how to access and manage your money better.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS COMMISSION
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Happy World Consumer Rights Day Jamaica!

World Consumer Rights Day (WCRD) is celebrated annually on March 15 with the theme promulgated throughout the year. The general theme this year was focussed on raising awareness and engaging consumers globally to adopt and promote more sustainable practices.

It also built on last year's theme which focused on the central role that consumer advocates, governments and businesses can play in tackling the global plastic pollution crisis.

Within this context, the CAC opted to be more targeted based on Jamaica's situation, and observed World Consumer Rights Day 2021 under the theme: "The COVID Conscious Consumer: Food Security, Waste Disposal and Money Management". These areas were chosen given the COVID 19 pandemic and the everyday experiences of consumers in Jamaica.

MONEY MANAGEMENT

- ✓ CREATE A BUDGET
- ✓ MANAGE BILLS
- ✓ CUT EXPENSES AND CREATE INCOME
- ✓ PROTECT YOUR IDENTITY
- ✓ READ THE FINE PRINT



CAC CONTINUES DEVELOPMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS JAMAICA APP



State Minister in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce, Dr. the Hon. Norman Dunn.

The Consumer Affairs Commission has been hailed by State Minister in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce, Dr. the Hon. Norman Dunn, for the continued development of its mobile app.

Speaking at the Commission's recent Quarterly Press Briefing themed #JamaicaConsumerTalks, Dr. Dunn stated that it is clear that the agency is committed to its responsibility to ensure that consumers of Jamaica are protected.

The CAC Jamaica Mobile App enables consumers to identify the geographical

location of chosen outlets, compare prices and create baskets of goods prior to making any purchase. In addition, users may access consumer news and laws, product recalls, market surveillance of the textbook prices, banking fees and rates, hardware items as well as any other economic operation that the Minister may deem necessary for research or investigation. The CAC Jamaica App may be used to also file complaints.



Also speaking at the virtual event, Chairman of the CAC, Donovan White, revealed that since the launch of the mobile app, more than 4,000 persons downloaded the app and feedback from users has been useful. "The user review gave good ideas for the next upgraded release of the application, which is currently in the BETA testing phase and will allow IOS users to join Android users in downloading the CAC App free of cost," he said.



Chairman of the Consumer Affairs Commission, Mr. Donovan White.

The Consumer Affairs Commission in December 2020, launched CAC Live #JamaicaConsumerTalks, a virtual engagement streamed live on Facebook to facilitate interaction with consumers and provide information.

CAC Live #JamaicaConsumerTalks is streamed on the last two Wednesdays of each month.

#YouAndTheCPA
HELPDESK
 @CACJamaica
WEDNESDAY
DECEMBER 9, 2020
10:00AM
1 HOUR SESSION
SACHA-GAYE RUSSELL
 LEGAL OFFICER

#JamaicaConsumerTalks
3R's
 • REPAIR
 • REPLACE
 • REFUND
 WARRANTIES AND BUDGETING
 @CACJamaica
WEDNESDAY
DECEMBER 2, 2020
10:00AM
1 HOUR SESSION
RICHARD ROWE
 REGIONAL OFFICER

#YouAndTheCPA
MICRO CREDIT ACT
 @CACJamaica
WEDNESDAY
MARCH 24, 2021
10:00AM
SACHA-GAYE RUSSELL
 LEGAL OFFICER



INFORMATION

YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO GET THE CORRECT INFORMATION ABOUT PRODUCTS.

GET THE FACTS YOU NEED.
 USE THE INFORMATION WISELY.



Consumer Alert™

*Prices at Approved /Accredited Private Sector Laboratories Testing for SARS-CoV-2 in Jamaica
as at April 26, 2021*

| NAME OF LABORATORY | TYPE OF COVID- 19 TESTS CONDUCTED | | PRICES OF COVID-19 TESTS CONDUCTED | | | | TURN AROUND TIME FOR TEST RESULTS | |
|--|-----------------------------------|--------------|------------------------------------|---------|------------------------------|---------|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| | PCR TEST | ANTIGEN TEST | PCR | | ANTIGEN | | PCR TEST | ANTIGEN TEST |
| | | | (J\$) | (US\$) | (J\$) | (US\$) | | |
| KINGSTON | | | | | | | | |
| AIDS Health Foundation | X | ✓ | | | \$8,000 | | | Same Day |
| Andrew's Memorial Hospital | X | ✓ | | | \$10,000 | | | 24 Hours |
| BioMedical Caledonia Laboratory Ltd. | ✓ | ✓ | \$25,000 | | \$8,000 | | 5-7 Days | 24-48 Hours |
| Central Medical Laboratory | X | ✓ | | | \$8,000 | | | 24 Hours |
| Dunrobin Medical and Wellness Centre | X | ✓ | | | \$9,000 (In Office) | | | 20-30 Minutes |
| | | | | | \$10,000 (In Drive-Thru) | | | |
| Fleet Diagnosis Laboratory | X | ✓ | | | \$8,000 (At Laboratory) | | | Same Day |
| | | | | | \$9,000 (Doctor's Office) | | | |
| Health Plus Associates | X | ✓ | | | \$8,000 | | | 8-10 Minutes |
| Health Renew | X | ✓ | | | \$7,500 | | | 15-20 Minutes |
| Josk Medical Laboratory | X | ✓ | | | \$8,000 | | | 15-30 Minutes |
| LRI Medical Laboratory Limited | ✓ | ✓ | \$20,500 | | \$7,500 | | 24-48 Hours | 1-2 Hours |
| MD Link | ✓ | ✓ | \$27,000 | 180 USD | \$10,000 | 70 USD | 72 Hours | 20 Minutes |
| | | | \$22,000 (In Drive-Thru) | | \$7,500 (In Drive-Thru) | | 48 Hours | 30 Minutes |
| Microlabs Limited | ✓ | ✓ | \$20,000 | | \$7,000 | | 48 Hours | Same Day |
| Technological Solutions Limited ^[2] | ✓ | ✓ | \$22,500 | 150 USD | \$7,500 | 50 USD | 24-36 Hours | 2-3 Hours |
| Vein Centers of Jamaica | X | ✓ | | | \$8,000 | | | 15 Minutes |
| Winchester Medical and Surgical Institute | X | ✓ | | | \$8,000 (Weekdays) | | | 8-24 Hours |
| | | | | | \$10,000 (Weekends) | | | |
| Windsor Wellness Centre | ✓ | ✓ | \$22,000 | | \$8,500 | | 48-72 Hours | 30 Minutes |
| CARIGEN ^[3] | | | | | | | | |
| MANDEVILLE | | | | | | | | |
| Microlabs Limited | ✓ | ✓ | \$20,000 | | \$7,000 | | 48 Hours | Same Day |
| MONTEGO BAY | | | | | | | | |
| Baywest Hospital | ✓ | ✓ | \$20,000 | 200 USD | \$10,000 | 100 USD | 48 Hours | 15-30 Minutes |
| BioMedical Caledonia Laboratory Ltd. | ✓ | ✓ | \$25,000 | | \$8,000 | | 5-7 Days | 24-48 Hours |
| Hospiten | X | ✓ | | | \$5,500 | 55 USD | | 24 Hours |
| Microlabs Limited | ✓ | ✓ | \$20,000 | | \$7,000 | | 48 Hours | Same Day |
| Oneness Health Centre | ✓ | ✓ | \$22,000 | | \$8,000 | | 24-48 Hours | Same Day |
| Pulseline Family Centre | X | ✓ | | | \$8,000 | | | 15-30 Minutes |
| CLARENDON | | | | | | | | |
| Procare Health Services ^[4] | X | ✓ | | | \$8,500 | | | 24 Hours |
| SD Medical | X | ✓ | | | \$8,000 | | | 30 Minutes |

Key:

- Cells highlighted in red signify the highest price for that particular item, amongst the outlets surveyed in that parish.
- Cells highlighted in green signify the lowest price for that particular item, amongst the outlets surveyed in that parish.
- Blank cells indicate that no price observations were made for that particular item, amongst the outlets surveyed in that parish.

Notes:

- Telephone Survey conducted by the Consumer Affairs Commission (CAC) between April 17 and 26, 2021
- For express PCR results (under 24 hours), the cost is \$37,500 (250 USD)
- No price data was obtained from this facility
- Procure Health Services is not on the approved or accredited listing; Express results (under 24 hours) available for \$10,000
- List of approved laboratories obtained from MOHW Website and accredited labs from JANAAC website.
- Telephone verification obtained for all prices.
- The table will be updated periodically when verified price data becomes available
- N/A - information not available at time of survey.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS COMMISSION COVID-19 SURVEILLANCE

Since March 2020, the Consumer Affairs Commission (CAC) has increased its surveillance of consumer products whose demand and supply have been impacted by the global pandemic. The products include basic food items, sanitation, hygiene products and protective equipment, computer equipment, banking fees and petrol products. The passage of the Trade (Sale of Goods During Period of Declaration of Disaster Area) Order 2020, in March 2020 has empowered the CAC to conduct investigations into cases of price gouging as defined by the legislation. The current investigation focusses on the difference in the prices of SARS-CoV-2 testing in Jamaica. While the Commission is aware that various providers conduct PCR and antigen testing at various prices, we have provided the prices of these tests at Approved /Accredited Laboratories (with the exception of one lab). Consumers are advised to report to the CAC, any excessive pricing observed in the market.



TESTIMONIALS

The Consumer Affairs Commission is guided by the Consumer Protection Act (Amended 2012), when resolving complaints brought to the Commission by consumers. The following are success stories that the Commission has resolved.

Custom marble design or pulling the wool over the eye?

The complainant reported that a deposit of \$150,000.00 was made on a selected colour of granite countertop. When delivered it was not the correct one. The complainant was later told by the vendor that despite showing him the sample earlier, the selected one was no longer available. He requested a refund but was told of a 10% restocking fee.

The Commission made contact with the vendor. Based on our intervention, a full refund was given.

Bottoms up or off?

The complainant reported that he bought a shoe and when he tried it on at home later that day the bottom fell off. He reported it to the vendor who offered a replacement. They however, did not have anything else he liked. The vendor refused a refund.

The CAC contacted the vendor and based on the intervention a full refund in the amount of \$9000.00 was given.

Genuine malfunction

The complainant reported that she purchased a tablet for her granddaughter and soon thereafter, the unit stopped working. She returned it to the vendor who did not offer redress as he stated that the unit fell, therefore he was not responsible. She asked for the CAC's intervention.

The Commission made contact with the vendor and advised him that the consumer could provide evidence of the unit malfunctioning, and hence under the CPA Section 21, he had obligations. As a result of the Commission's intervention the unit was assessed and subsequently repaired.

ARE YOU READY, JAMAICA?

Planning for the hurricane season can be stressful, especially during the COVID 19 pandemic.

HURRICANE SEASON PREPARATION



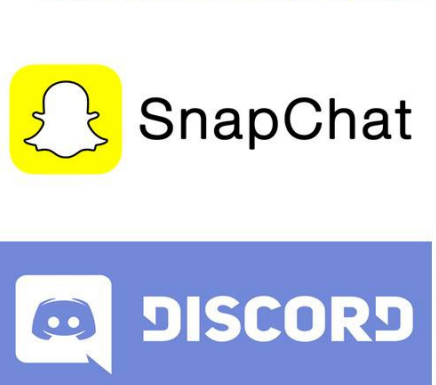
The official hurricane season is June 1 to November 30. The period is usually a rainy one even if a hurricane does not develop. The Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM) recommends that the following activities be done at the beginning of the hurricane season.

At the Start of the Hurricane Season

- Check thoroughly the roof of your house, hurricane shutters, hooks and latches and effect repairs where necessary.
- Keep in stock extra plastic bags and sheets of plastic. Plastic is essential to prevent important documents, paintings, equipment and furniture from getting wet.
- Trim trees that touch power lines or hang over the house and other buildings.
- Make sure that emergency cooking facilities such as coal stoves are in good working condition as these may be necessary.
- Make sure you have a supply of kerosene and coal. Keep coal dry by wrapping in a plastic bag or other waterproof material.
- Latch down securely all small buildings in the yard such as outdoor kitchens, pit latrines, tool sheds, barns, etc.
- Store extra food, especially things that can be eaten without cooking or which need very little preparation. Electricity may be off during a hurricane, leaving you without refrigeration.
- Make sure you have emergency equipment in your home. These include waterboots, raincoats, flashlights, batteries, portable radio, kerosene lamps and matches.
- Have simple first-aid equipment such as iodine, bandages, eye lotion, etc. at home.



Social Media: Benefits and Risks



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, social distancing is the new norm. As a result, the business of educating children has also migrated online. This means that children now have increased access to the internet, and if left unsupervised, this situation can pose some serious threats. Parents and guardians need to know the various platforms and games to better guide your child.

POPULAR ONLINE GAMES (ALLOW CHAT FEATURES)

- Fortnite
- Roblox
- MineCraft

SOCIAL MEDIA (IMPROVE SOCIAL STATUS)

Tiktok

- Songs and videos that may contain lots of dodgy content.
- There maybe creepy comments.
- Gaining followers and fans feels important.

Discord is a place for gamers to chat while playing video games, but has become a bigger platform where users can use text, voice-chat, and video-chat to discuss a wide variety of topics. Public and Private Servers (groups)

- There are public and private "servers"
- Some groups are more moderated than others, some are not safe for work (NSFW), and some are hate-filled.

Snapchat is a messaging app that lets users put a time limit on the pictures and videos they send before they disappear.

- It is a myth that Snapchats go away forever.
- It can make sexting seem OK.
- There is a lot of questionable, clicky content

Instagram users snap, edit, and share photos and 15-second videos.

- Teens are on the lookout for "likes."
- Public photos are the default.
- Kids can send private messages.

Twitter and WhatsApp are for users 16 and over.