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FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES
COMMISSIONER NICOLE "NIKKI" FRIED

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FDACS Works to Increase Consumer Safety and Accountability for COVID-19 Directives

Tallahassee, Fla. – With [over 10,000 new COVID-19 cases](#) in Florida today alone, **Agriculture Commissioner Nikki Fried** is making available the **Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services'** (FDACS) Division of Consumer Services to help hold bad actors accountable for ignoring COVID-19 directives.

"As Florida's COVID-19 cases skyrocket, we must all do our part to beat this virus. We're making our Division of Consumer Services available to help hold bad actors accountable for ignoring COVID-19 directives," said **Commissioner Fried**. "We have been in touch with the 40,000 licensed businesses we regulate to provide guidance on sanitization and safety procedures. But guidelines and directives only help reduce COVID-19's spread if everyone follows the rules. Consumers who see businesses and organizations ignoring state or local ordinances should report it to FDACS at 1-800-HELP-FLA or FloridaConsumerHelp.com."

Since March 1, FDACS has received 815 consumer complaints related to COVID-19 regarding travel, landlord/tenant, moving and storage, gyms and health studios, and other issues. FDACS [has provided guidance](#) to food retailers, markets, and other businesses on food safety and sanitization practices to help mitigate the spread of the virus.

"Slowing the spread of COVID-19 in Florida should be critical to every consumer, resident, and visitor," said **Susan McGrath**, Executive Director of the Florida Consumer Action Network. "Keeping our communities safe will take everyone working together, and that includes holding accountable those who fail to follow state and local rules on public health and safety. We thank

Commissioner Fried for making Florida's consumer protection agency available to help ensure businesses put Floridians' health first."

For Consumers: To file a consumer complaint, use the Division of Consumer Services' [online form](#) or call 1-800-HELP-FLA (1-800-FL-AYUDA en Español). **Examples of state and local COVID-19 ordinances** include requirements for wearing of face masks, closures and capacity limitations of certain businesses such as bars and restaurants, and the presence of handwashing stations in food preparation areas of retail establishments. [Local communities](#) have also encouraged residents to report violations of COVID-19 ordinances. Consumers should check local government websites for the latest information on local COVID-19 ordinances.

Background: The [FDACS Division of Consumer Services](#) is Florida's state consumer protection agency, responsible for handling consumer complaints, protecting against unfair and unsafe business practices, and more. FDACS handles over 400,000 consumer complaints and inquiries annually, oversees more than 500,000 regulated devices, entities, and products like gas pumps and grocery scales, performs over 61,000 lab analyses on products like gasoline and brake fluid, performs nearly 9,000 fair ride inspections, and returned over \$2.8 million to consumers through mediations with businesses. The Division regulates a wide variety of businesses including motor vehicle repair shops, pawnbrokers, health studios, travel sellers, intrastate movers, professional surveyors and mappers, sweepstakes/game promotions, and telemarketers.