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Consumer Council of Fiji



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PRESS RELEASE

Don't Fuel the Panic; Consumers Urged to Stop Hoarding Fuel

Consumers across the country are being urged to show restraint and responsibility following recent observations of consumers and commercial operators engaging in the bulk-buying and hoarding of fuel.

Reports have reached the Council of individuals bringing large gallons to service stations across the country, fuelled by anxieties over geopolitical conflicts and the resulting disruption of global supply chains. While these international tensions may lead to anticipated increases in costs, the Council stresses that current domestic supply levels do not justify the level of panic currently being displayed at the pumps.

The Council warns that this behavior is creating a dangerous "artificial shortage" where one would not otherwise exist. By attempting to stockpile fuel, consumers are depleting local reserves faster than the supply chain can naturally replenish them, effectively bringing about the very shortages they are trying to avoid.

“We have seen this happen before,” says the Consumer Council CEO Seema Shandil. “During the COVID-19 pandemic, we witnessed the same patterns with toilet paper, sugar, and salt. In those instances, the supply was sufficient for the population's needs, but the sheer volume of panic buying created empty shelves and unnecessary hardship for others”.

Furthermore, the Council wishes to highlight the severe safety risks associated with storing large quantities of fuel in residential areas or in non-specialized containers. Hoarding fuel at home or in unregulated commercial spaces poses a significant fire hazard to families and the wider community. We urge both private citizens and commercial operators to maintain their normal purchasing habits and buy only what is necessary for their immediate operations to ensure that essential services and the general public have fair and equitable access to fuel.

The Consumer Council reminds the public that collective responsibility is the most effective way to prevent market instability. By acting with patience and avoiding the urge to hoard, we can ensure that fuel remains available for everyone. Consumers who witness unfair trade practices are encouraged to contact the Council on the toll-free number 155 or via email at Complaints@consumersfiji.org.

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