

Features of the consumer price collection used in April 2020 to calculate the Consumer Price Index in conditions of COVID-19

In April 2020, despite the state of emergency declared in the country, the price observation was carried out according to schedule.

In the context of the state of emergency declared in the country due to the COVID-19 pandemic, ARMSTAT continued to carry out price observations in basic organizations engaged in trade and services having the right to conduct economic activities in accordance with the order and methodology of CPI observations. At the same time, in order to avoid risks, direct visits to basic objects for price observations were minimized and used only during the food observations. Price observations of non-food products and service tariffs were conducted online, by telephone and other statistical methods.

Restrictions imposed during the state of emergency led to the temporary termination of activities of some basic organizations engaged in retail trade and services, which made it impossible to register the prices of certain goods (services).

Price observations for CPI calculations are carried out in about 4500 organizations in the consumer market of the Republic of Armenia. About 620 out of them are observed for food products. In the conditions of the state of emergency, the price monitoring was carried out in accordance with the established order for CPI (Order of consumer goods prices and services tariffs for the calculation of the consumer price index <https://www.armstat.am/file/doc/99518253.pdf>).

About 1,800 out of 3880 or 46.4% of basic organizations engaged in non-food goods sale and services, selected for CPI calculations were temporarily closed, and, as a result, no prices were recorded. At the same time, shoes and clothing, large and small household appliances, building materials, furniture, as well as public catering organizations had an online platform, which made it possible to observe prices.

Due to the state of emergency, prices were recorded for 386 out of 427 items of goods and services included in the CPI basket. Data on the remaining 41 goods and services were missing. Instead of their indexes, the price indexes of the respective subgroups were used in the calculations by using the internationally accepted imputation method (Methodological guidelines for consumer goods prices and service tariffs monitoring and consumer price index calculation (Chapter X, XI) <https://www.armstat.am/file/ /99518258.pdf>). Fixed tariffs have been applied to some missing types of public transport.