

# COVID-19 GUIDELINES FOR INFORMAL TRADERS (in streets, markets and spaza shops)

## COVID-19 is highly infectious.

It spreads through contact with people who have the virus – even those who do not show symptoms. COVID-19 is spread mainly via respiratory droplets. When someone coughs, sneezes or speaks, they spray small droplets from their nose or mouth.

The virus spreads in spaces with lots of people and little movement of air. The particles disperse quickly if you are outside, particularly if there is a breeze, making contracting the virus less likely.

COVID-19 can also spread from touching contaminated surfaces and then touching your eyes, mouth or nose. The virus sticks to surfaces and can survive for hours, and even days, on banknotes, coins, clothes and other things.

Elderly people (over the age of 60); people with diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, HIV/AIDS or cancer; and pregnant women are particularly at risk if they catch COVID-19.

If you are elderly, pregnant or have any of these conditions, or live with someone who does, you should take extra precautions.

**If you show these symptoms, you may have COVID-19, which means it is not safe for you to be at work and you can make others sick.**



Most people infected with COVID-19 are able to recover at home. If you have a cough, fever, a sore throat and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention. See [here](#) for more information on the signs and symptoms.

If you or your family develop symptoms, call the 24-hour toll-free number 0800 029 999

## INFORMAL TRADERS NEED GOVERNMENTS TO:

### DO NO HARM:

- Police and other enforcement officials must stop harassing traders.
- Prohibit confiscation of traders' goods during lockdown.

### FACILITATE SAFE TRADING:

- Provide unlimited water points so that traders can wash their hands, workplaces and products frequently.
- Provide sanitisers and/or bleach as a matter of urgency.
- Be flexible about trading layouts so that street and market traders can practise physical distancing. Some local authorities have allocated streets for trading.
- Provide health screening at trading sites.

### SIMPLIFY LICENSING AND SUSPEND FEES:

- Make the issuing of permits simple and fair.
- Suspend trading fees while traders re-establish themselves.

### PROVIDE INCOME SUPPORT AND GRANTS:

- Informal workers have been particularly hard hit by measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and need direct income support.
- Traders have used their last savings over lockdown and need cash grants to start trading again.

### HAVE REGULAR MEETINGS WITH TRADERS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS:

- Traders need to be involved in planning and policy decisions that affect them. As StreetNet International says, 'nothing for us without us'.

## IF SAFETY GUIDELINES ARE FOLLOWED, INFORMAL TRADERS CAN TRADE AS SAFELY AS FORMAL TRADERS:



- 1 Wear a cloth mask that covers your mouth and nose. Avoid touching the mask.** Wash and iron after use every day. Have a few masks so that you have a clean one to wear every day. Insist that customers wear masks too. Consider wearing a visor to protect your eyes.



- 2 Avoid touching your face – especially your eyes, mouth and nose. When you cough or sneeze, cover your face with the inside of your elbow.**



- 3 Avoid touching people. Do not greet people by touching them.** Keep two metres away from people. Where this is impossible, then at least keep at arm's length.



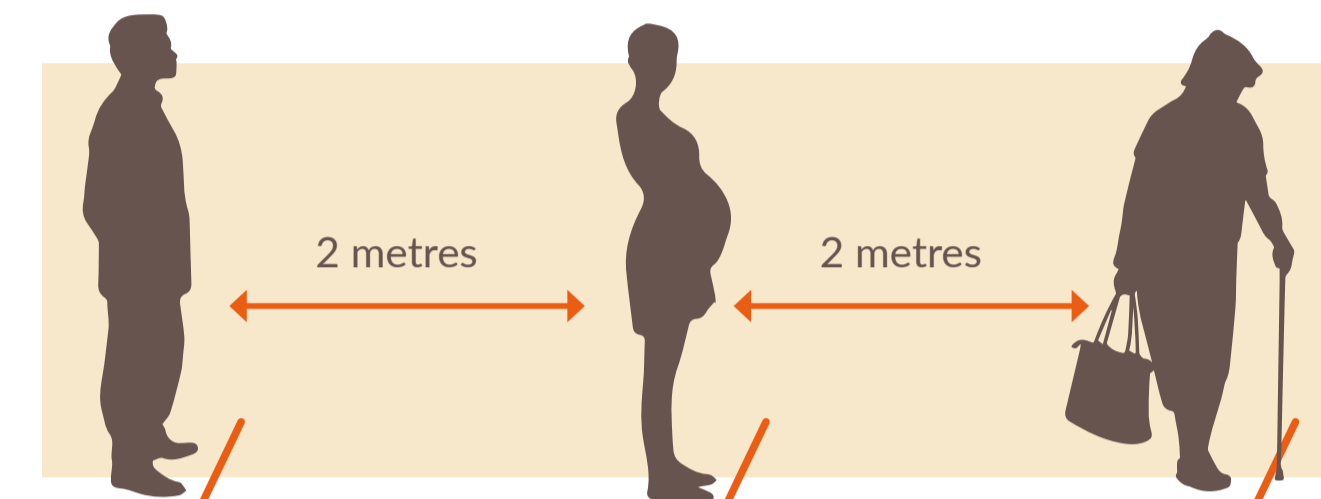
- 4 Wash your hands with soap and water often:**



- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds. Clean all parts of your hands and fists, washing between fingers and fingertips and halfway up your forearms.
- Wash your hands before you start your workday, throughout the day, and especially before eating.
- Wash your hands after coughing or sneezing.
- Wash your hands before you start your workday, throughout the day, and especially before eating.
- Wash your hands after any exchanges with customers (of products and cash).
- Wash your hands after coughing or sneezing.
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home.

- 5 Street and market traders need to trade two metres apart, so local governments need to be flexible with trader layouts and locations.**

- 6 Customers should keep two metres distance from each other, by queueing alongside trader/market stalls or outside spazas.** Drawing lines on the ground is a simple way to show how people should queue and how far they should stay from you and your stall/shop.



- 7 Give priority to high-risk customers** (such as pensioners, people with disabilities and pregnant women) by giving them preference in queues.

- 8 Ask customers not to touch products.**



- 9 Clean all frequently touched surfaces with sanitiser or disinfectant.** This includes your cell phone and also door handles and railings.

- Street and market traders:** Clean your tables and non-food products with disinfectant.  
**Spaza shop owners and employees:** Wipe down surfaces such as countertops, tills and handles with disinfectant.  
**Spray customers' hands with sanitiser.**

- 10 Avoid handling cash:** Encourage customers to deposit cash in an envelope, box or jar. COVID-19 droplets can be on coins and banknotes. Consider keeping today's money separate from yesterday's. Wash your hands or use sanitiser between customers. Use digital payment methods where possible. Consider signing up for Snapscan or Zapper. If you have card payment facilities, clean these with bleach solution before and after each use.

- 11 Re-used plastic bags can carry the virus.** If customers use their own bags, avoid touching them. If you provide plastic bags, avoid re-used ones.

**How to make your own disinfectant:** If you do not have sanitiser, 6 teaspoons of bleach in 1 litre of water is an effective disinfectant **for surfaces**.



**How to build a wash station:** If you do not have running water on site for you and your customers, consider building a wash station. See instructions [here](#).



## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS:

Even under lockdown, all government officials must respect the right to just administrative action when issuing or revoking licences, adjusting trading fees, allocating trading space, confiscating goods, and evicting or moving traders.

Any action taken by a municipal or law enforcement official is an administrative action and it must be "just", according to the law. This right is protected in the Constitution (S33) and detailed in the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (PAJA) 3 of 2000.

### TO BE "JUST", THESE ACTIONS MUST:

- **BE LAWFUL.** Officials must act within the confines of the law; be authorized to take action and not abuse or exceed their authority.
- **BE REASONABLE.** Actions/decisions taken must be rational and linked to the purpose.
- **BE PROCEDURALLY FAIR.** They must include the right to a hearing, meaningful consultation with affected traders, and the decision-making must be unbiased.

**NOTE: If an official confiscates your goods, they must give you a receipt.** This receipt must include the details of what the goods are, the addresses where they will be stored and how long they will be kept.

If your rights are being violated, call the legal support hotline 066 076 8845

### TO PROTECT YOURSELF, MAKE SURE THAT YOU:

- Follow the health guidelines.
- Always keep a copy of your permit and your documents on you.
- Keep up to date with the permit requirements. These may change during different lockdown stages.

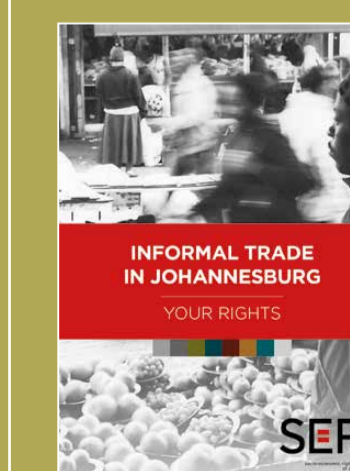
### IF AN OFFICIAL MAKES A DECISION THAT AFFECTS YOU:

- Ask them for reasons.
- Ask them which law gives them the authority to act.
- Take photographs or video actions such as confiscating goods.

For more information on using administrative law to protect the rights of informal workers including traders, see [this WIEGO booklet](#).



For information on traders' general rights, see [this SERI guide](#).



## ACCESSING FINANCIAL SUPPORT:

If you cannot work, you can apply for the special **COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress Grant**, of R350 per month. Refugees, asylum seekers and people with special dispensation permits can apply until the end of October, 2020. For details, see <https://srd.sassa.gov.za/>.



These guidelines were developed by WIEGO in close consultation with experts in public health (Professors Rajen Naidoo and Leslie London) and the informal economy/food systems. July 2020.

