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 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 before 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. Wash your hands with soap and water often:
   - Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds. Clean all parts of your hands and fingers, washing between fingers and fingertips and half way 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 after any exchanges with customers (of products and cash).
   - Wash your hands as soon as you get home.

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

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 queuing 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. Provide unlimited water points so that traders can wash their hands, facemasks and other items.

8. Provide sanitisers and/or bleach as a matter of urgency.

9. 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 before handling cash. 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.

10. 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.

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