The coronavirus is highly infectious. It spreads through contact with people who already have the virus – even those who do not show symptoms – or from touching contaminated surfaces and then touching your eyes, mouth or nose. COVID-19 sticks to surfaces - plastic, cardboard, metal, wood and money. It can survive for up to five days. These are some guidelines to prevent being infected and infecting others. Research shows that across the global South, informal operators are key to the food security of low-income households. Some countries have recognised this and declared informal food traders essential service providers. As long as safety guidelines are followed, informal traders can trade as safely as supermarkets.

**COVID-19 HEALTH GUIDELINES FOR INFORMAL TRADERS**

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- Cough
- Fever
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath

Most people infected with COVID-19 experience a cough, fever, a sore throat and shortness of breath but are able to recover at home. Older people, and those with medical problems such as high blood pressure, heart problems and diabetes, are more likely to develop serious illness. If you have a cough, fever, a sore throat and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention. Call in advance. Follow the directions of your local health authority. The World Health Organisation provides regularly updated advice for the public [here](https://www.who.int). The World Health Organisation provides regularly updated advice for the public [here](https://www.who.int).

**IF YOU ARE AT WORK AS AN ESSENTIAL SERVICE PROVIDER:**

1. **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 under your fingernails. Rinse with water, dry your hands and then at least keep at arm's length.
   - Wash your hands after coughing or sneezing.
   - Wash your hands after touching any object that others regularly touch.
   - Wash your hands as soon as you get home.

   **NOTE:** Hand sanitisers do not work as a preventative measure on dirty hands – because the virus sticks to the dirt on your hands. When you wash your hands, do not touch the tap with your hands. Open and close it with a piece of newspaper that you throw away afterwards.

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. **Wear a cloth mask that covers your mouth and nose.** Avoid touching the mask. Wash and iron after use. Have a few masks so that you always have a clean one to wear. Encourage customers to wear masks too.

4. **Avoid touching people. Do not greet people by touching them.** Keep 2 metres away from people. Where this is impossible, then at least keep at arm’s length.

5. **Wash your hands if you handle money:** Money can carry the virus. If you handle cash, wash your hands if you handle cash. Use digital payment methods where possible.

6. **Avoid handling cash:** Encourage customers to deposit cash in a box or jar. Coins can be dropped into a soap/bleach solution first. Wash your hands if you handle cash. Use digital payment methods where possible.

7. **Recycled plastic bags can carry the virus.** If customers use their own bags, avoid touching them. If you provide plastic bags, avoid recycled ones.

**POLICY ISSUES FOR SAFE FOOD TRADE:**

- **Promptly allow all food traders to trade.**
- **Provide unlimited water points so that traders can wash their hands, workplaces and products frequently.**
- **Provide masks, sanitisers and/or bleach as a matter of urgency.**
- **Exempt food traders from any vending fees.**
- **Be flexible about trading layouts so that street and market traders can practise physical distancing.**
- **Provide security, in coordination with other security services, in trading areas and around spaza shops.** This will assist people in keeping the 2-metre distance, and also deal with the risk of looting.

**STAY AT HOME:**

Doctors advise staying at home, if you can. This is why direct income support from national government to all informal workers is critical.

- **Informal workers are crucial at this time.**
- **Informal workers provide income to other members of their households.**
- **Informal workers often work in sectors that have been designated as essential services.**
- **Informal workers are the most vulnerable to COVID-19.**
- **Informal workers need income support.**

**IF CUSTOMERS QUEUE:**

- **Encourage customers to queue:** In informal trading, people should queue and how far they stand from each other, by drawing lines on the ground a simple way to show how people should queue and how far they should stay from you and your stall/shop.

**HOW TO BUILD A WASH STATION:**

1. **Put a basin under the bottle to catch the waste water.** Place a basin under the bottle to catch the waste water. If you do not have running water, deposit cash in a box or jar. Coins can be dropped into a soap/bleach solution first. How to build a wash station. If you do not have running water on site for you and your customers, consider building one. Place a basin under the bottle to catch the waste water. See instructions [here](https://www.who.int).

**REMINDERS:**

1. **If you do not have sanitisers:** The advice from public health specialists is - if you use disposable gloves to protect yourself, they should be thrown away after each task. The virus sits on gloves and cannot be washed off in the same way as washing hands. Used gloves should be treated as contaminated. It is much better to be able to wash your hands with soap and water than to use gloves.

2. **IF YOU ARE AT WORK AS AN ESSENTIAL SERVICE PROVIDER:**

- **Wash your hands after coughing or sneezing.**
- **Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds.**
- **Wipe down surfaces such as countertops, tills and handles.**
- **Clean your tables and products with disinfectant.**
- **Avoid touching the mask.** Avoid touching the mask. Wash and iron after use. Have a few masks so that you always have a clean one to wear. Encourage customers to wear masks too.

3. **How to make your own disinfectant:** If you do not have disinfectant, 1 cup of bleach in 6 cups of water is an effective disinfectant. If you do not have running water, deposit cash in a box or jar. Coins can be dropped into a soap/bleach solution first. How to build a wash station. If you do not have running water on site for you and your customers, consider building one. Place a basin under the bottle to catch the waste water. See instructions [here](https://www.who.int).

4. **Give priority to high-risk customers:** (such as pensioners 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 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. **Ask customers not to touch products (as far as possible).**

8. **If customers queue:** In informal trading, people should queue and how far they stand from each other, by drawing lines on the ground a simple way to show how people should queue and how far they should stay from you and your stall/shop.

**STAY AT HOME:**

Doctors advise staying at home, if you can. This is why direct income support from national government to all informal workers is critical.

- **Informal workers are crucial at this time.**
- **Informal workers provide income to other members of their households.**
- **Informal workers often work in sectors that have been designated as essential services.**
- **Informal workers are the most vulnerable to COVID-19.**
- **Informal workers need income support.**

**IF CUSTOMERS QUEUE:**

- **Encourage customers to queue:** In informal trading, people should queue and how far they stand from each other, by drawing lines on the ground a simple way to show how people should queue and how far they should stay from you and your stall/shop.

**HOW TO BUILD A WASH STATION:**

1. **Put a basin under the bottle to catch the waste water.** Place a basin under the bottle to catch the waste water. If you do not have running water, deposit cash in a box or jar. Coins can be dropped into a soap/bleach solution first. How to build a wash station. If you do not have running water on site for you and your customers, consider building one. Place a basin under the bottle to catch the waste water. See instructions [here](https://www.who.int).

**REMINDERS:**

1. **If you do not have sanitisers:** The advice from public health specialists is - if you use disposable gloves to protect yourself, they should be thrown away after each task. The virus sits on gloves and cannot be washed off in the same way as washing hands. Used gloves should be treated as contaminated. It is much better to be able to wash your hands with soap and water than to use gloves.

2. **IF YOU ARE AT WORK AS AN ESSENTIAL SERVICE PROVIDER:**

- **Wash your hands after coughing or sneezing.**
- **Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds.**
- **Wipe down surfaces such as countertops, tills and handles.**
- **Clean your tables and products with disinfectant.**
- **Avoid touching the mask.** Avoid touching the mask. Wash and iron after use. Have a few masks so that you always have a clean one to wear. Encourage customers to wear masks too.

3. **How to make your own disinfectant:** If you do not have disinfectant, 1 cup of bleach in 6 cups of water is an effective disinfectant. If you do not have running water, deposit cash in a box or jar. Coins can be dropped into a soap/bleach solution first. How to build a wash station. If you do not have running water on site for you and your customers, consider building one. Place a basin under the bottle to catch the waste water. See instructions [here](https://www.who.int).

4. **Give priority to high-risk customers:** (such as pensioners 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 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. **Ask customers not to touch products (as far as possible).”**

**STAY AT HOME:**

Doctors advise staying at home, if you can. This is why direct income support from national government to all informal workers is critical.

- **Informal workers are crucial at this time.**
- **Informal workers provide income to other members of their households.**
- **Informal workers often work in sectors that have been designated as essential services.**
- **Informal workers are the most vulnerable to COVID-19.**
- **Informal workers need income support.**

**IF CUSTOMERS QUEUE:**

- **Encourage customers to queue:** In informal trading, people should queue and how far they stand from each other, by drawing lines on the ground a simple way to show how people should queue and how far they should stay from you and your stall/shop.

**HOW TO BUILD A WASH STATION:**

1. **Put a basin under the bottle to catch the waste water.** Place a basin under the bottle to catch the waste water. If you do not have running water, deposit cash in a box or jar. Coins can be dropped into a soap/bleach solution first. How to build a wash station. If you do not have running water on site for you and your customers, consider building one. Place a basin under the bottle to catch the waste water. See instructions [here](https://www.who.int).

**REMINDERS:**

1. **If you do not have sanitisers:** The advice from public health specialists is - if you use disposable gloves to protect yourself, they should be thrown away after each task. The virus sits on gloves and cannot be washed off in the same way as washing hands. Used gloves should be treated as contaminated. It is much better to be able to wash your hands with soap and water than to use gloves.