



**economic development
& tourism**

MPUMALANGA PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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MEDIA STATEMENT

Date: Monday, 06 April 2020

Attention: Journalists, News Editors and Executive Producers

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEC NGOMANE CLARIFIES TRADING HOURS FOR SPAZA SHOPS AND INFORMAL FOOD TRADERS DURING LOCKDOWN PERIOD

Mbombela – Following the inclusion of informal food traders on the list of businesses permitted to trade during the lockdown period – provided they have obtained operating permits from their local municipalities, Finance, Economic Development and Tourism MEC, Mr Pat Ngomane, would like to stress that they are only allowed to operate from 07h00 to 17h00 daily.

“I would like to clarify that business operating times are strictly from 07h00 to 17h00 daily. This relates to spaza shops and informal food traders. I have given notice to the three (3) District Mayors in our Province, to make them aware of this. We are applying uniform trading hours throughout the Province during lockdown. This means no trader is permitted to operate before 07h00 or beyond 17h00. Anyone operating outside the stipulated times will thus be operating illegally, and will be dealt with in terms of the applicable law”, clarified MEC Ngomane.

The provincial trading times are in line with the Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act No. 57 of 2002) and the amended regulations, which has now included informal food traders as providers of essential goods and services during the lockdown period. Informal food traders without operating permits are urged to contact their local municipalities to apply for such permits.

“I would also like to emphasise that the selling or distribution of alcohol is strictly prohibited during the lockdown period. This also relates to shebeens, pubs, taverns in our townships, and any other place selling alcohol on their premises, like hotels and restaurants. As such, we have directed our law enforcement agencies to deal decisively with anyone trading in alcohol during this period, even if they are licensed”, stressed MEC Ngomane.



Community members are also advised to continue to wash their hands with soap and water regularly, for at least 20 seconds, or to utilise sanitisers with a minimum alcohol content of 60%. In case of emergency, they are advised to contact the National 24-Hour COVID-19 Hotline on 0800 029 999. Regular updates on the COVID-19 pandemic can also be received by interacting with government via the WhatsApp information line on 0600 123 456.

“We further urge all businesses to adhere to hygiene and health measures as stipulated, in order to curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus. At all times, they must ensure that their customers keep the appropriate social distance; they must ensure that hand sanitisers are always available at the door for their customers; and they must regularly sanitise countertops in their premises”, added Mr Ngomane.

Gambling and betting activities in the Province, were also suspended at the start of the 21-day lockdown period, and this remains effective.

MEC Ngomane concluded by acknowledging the crucial role played by small businesses and cooperatives in the economy of the Province, urging them to remain committed towards assisting government to create job opportunities for the people.

“Small or informal businesses, like spaza shops and informal food traders, are the ones that actually propel our economy. They provide essential services to our people, and they are even closer to their doorstep. Their significance is even evident now, during the lockdown, as they provide essential goods like bread, milk, vegetables and airtime. We appreciate their contribution and encourage them to continue providing these essential goods to our people”, concluded the MEC.

ENDS

***Issued by the Mpumalanga Department of Economic Development and Tourism
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