



THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
GOVERNMENT HOUSE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 23, 2020

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Governor Bryan Orders Residents to Stay at Home, Non-Essential Businesses to End In-Person Operations

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS — Governor Albert Bryan Jr. announced Monday, during the Government House Weekly Press Briefing, details of an executive order issued over the weekend requiring non-essential businesses to close and increased measures to restrict leisure travel to the territory.

Governor Bryan's Executive Order closes all bars within the territory effective Monday, March 23, and restricts dine-in eating at restaurants. The governor's order also limits all taxis and safaris to one half of their previously allowable capacity.

The governor's executive order also prohibits all hotels, guest houses, villas, bed and breakfasts, Airbnb, and charter vessels from accepting new bookings or new guests for 30 days.

The following businesses are allowed to remain open after Wednesday, March 25, as long as they operate within the existing mass gathering restrictions and promote the recommended social distancing requirement of 6 feet or more between individuals:

- Places that sell food or produce
- Places with medical purposes
- Core life services, such as gas stations, banks, laundromats, and shipping companies
- Places that provide shelter
- Media outlets

Governor Bryan's executive order also suspends portions of the V.I. Code, including:

- Sections relating to landlord-tenant actions and establishing the right of actions to recover possession of real property and demand for rent
- Provisions prohibiting Government retirees in certain professions from receiving their annuities if they return to the workforce

Previous measures to limit mass gatherings remain in effect. Last week, Governor Bryan ordered all non-essential government employees to stay home or telework and have closed schools and head start facilities throughout the Virgin Islands. The governor has also ordered the closure of senior centers and restricted visitation to eldercare facilities.

All government operations are restricted to essential services until April 6, 2020, and all schools will remain closed through at least April 14, 2020.

“To date, we have investigated 74 persons suspected of carrying the virus, and 55 of those cases tested negative, 17 positive, and we have two tests currently pending,” Governor Bryan said during the weekly press briefing. “Sixteen of the 17 positive individuals are quarantined and thankfully recovering at home without any need for hospitalization.

“I am happy to announce that our first positive case, reported a couple of weeks ago, has now fully recovered and has tested negative for the presence of the virus,” Governor Bryan said.

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