

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS ENACTS TOURISM RESTRICTIONS TO ADDRESS COVID-19 PANDEMIC

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS, March 24, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Beginning Wednesday, March 25, 2020, the U.S. Virgin Islands will close its doors to all visitors for 30 days, joining other destinations in global efforts to help stop the spread of Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19).

With 17 positive cases and more expected from pending tests, Governor Albert Bryan Jr. said safeguarding the health of residents and visitors remains the highest priority.

Governor Bryan stated that although the decisions to close the Territory's ports fall under the jurisdiction of the federal government, the Administration's move to prohibit visitor arrivals will help minimize the potential impact of the novel coronavirus on vulnerable members of the Virgin Islands community.

Restrictions are now in place that prevent hotels, guest houses, bed and breakfasts, home-sharing properties and charter vessels from accepting new guests. Guests who have already checked in to lodging facilities are advised to return home, but can remain in the Territory if they choose. Emergency management personnel, overnighting flight crews and officials responding to the COVID-19 crisis are exempt from the restriction.

Governor Bryan is ordering non-essential businesses to close and residents to stay at home as the Administration ramps up its response to COVID-19 in the Territory. All bars across the Territory are to be closed, and in-house dining is not allowed at restaurants; take-out services are permissible.

"If we all do our part and adhere to these containment strategies, the U.S. Virgin Islands will weather this storm, as we have many times before," Governor Bryan said. He added: "We all need to strap in, hunker down and row in the same direction toward a safe harbor from this pandemic and global crisis."

Commissioner of Tourism Joseph Boschulte informed that visitors who have made plans to visit the Territory between March 25 and April 25, 2020 are advised to contact their respective travel partners regarding relevant cancellation policies. "We are working closely with the USVI Hotel and Tourism Association to encourage travelers to postpone - not cancel - their visit," he said, while assuring that a warm welcome will await future travelers to the Territory once the crisis subsides.



Commissioner Boschulte added that while mitigation strategies were of paramount importance at this time, discussions were ongoing with air and cruise partners as the Territory prepares for its post-pandemic recovery.

Marine vessels 300 tons and over are required to clear with the United States Coast Guard and produce a manifest of every passenger. If a health issue is identified during the screening process, the Department of Health will be notified and called for consultation. Vessels under 300 tons must clear with U.S. Customs and Border Protection. Vessels that are registered with marinas must clear by appointment.

The Coast Guard recommends that all maritime vessels visit <https://homeport.uscg.mil/port-directory/san-juan> for procedures and restrictions.

To request clearance, call (340) 774-6755.

For tourism-related updates and information, visit www.usviupdate.com.

About the U.S. Virgin Islands

For more information about the United States Virgin Islands, go to VisitUSVI.com, follow us on Instagram (@visitusvi) and become a fan on Facebook (www.facebook.com/VisitUSVI). When traveling to the U.S. Virgin Islands, U.S. citizens enjoy all the conveniences of domestic travel - including on-line check-in - making travel to the U.S. Virgin Islands easier than ever. As a United States Territory, travel to the U.S. Virgin Islands does not require a passport from U.S. citizens arriving from Puerto Rico or the U.S. mainland. Entry requirements for non-U.S. citizens are the same as for entering the United States from any foreign destination. Upon departure, a passport is required for all but U.S. citizens.

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