



**THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
GOVERNMENT HOUSE**

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## **Governor Bryan Updates Residents on COVID-19**

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS — During the Monday press briefing at Government House in Christiansted, Governor Albert Bryan Jr. informed the community of a third fatality in the Territory from COVID-19 and urged residents not to let their guard down even though the public beaches have reopened.

The Territory's third death from COVID-19 was a 77-year-old man from St. Croix with an underlying history of health issues and who had recently travelled from Florida.

To date, 625 individuals have been tested for the coronavirus, with 554 testing negative. Of the 53 people who tested positive, 48 of them have recovered and the Virgin Islands Department of Health currently is tracking two cases and 18 test results still are pending.

Governor Bryan announced that all the Territory's public beaches have reopened, as have the beaches under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service, with the exception Cramer's Park on St. Croix's East End, which had been vandalized and is expected to reopen Wednesday, April 22.

"We are allowing beach restaurants to reopen, but we are restricting the sale of alcohol," Governor Bryan said. "I want to remind the public that the requirements for social distancing and avoiding mass gatherings are still in effect and will be fully enforced. That means absolutely no congregations of more than 10 individuals."

The Governor said governors on the mainland have tried to reopen their beaches only to see residents stop adhering to social and physical distancing regulations.

“If we run into similar issues with compliance here locally, I will have no choice but to close the beaches once again,” Governor Bryan cautioned. “I want to be absolutely clear, no picnics, no parties, no DJs, no get-togethers, no camping, no kick-backs, no bonfires.”

Governor Bryan also addressed the status of the federal stimulus checks and additional funding for the Paycheck Protection Program, and he said he has been assured by Delegate Stacey Plaskett and Congressional leaders that more federal funding for the pay check program is imminent.

The Governor also said residents who have not filed their income taxes for 2018 can obtain a federal stimulus check by filing a provisional tax return and indicate zero tax return and drop off the form at Internal Revenue Bureau office in their district. The governor said he anticipates people who use this process will get their stimulus checks by mid-May.

Governor Bryan also thanked all the nonprofits, businesses and private individuals who have stepped up to fill the gaps in the community brought on by the pandemic. He specifically highlighted the work of My Brothers Workshop, which has distributed more than 6,500 meals throughout the Territory and providing assistance to seniors and disabled residents.

The Governor concluded Monday’s briefing by noting that next week will mark the end of the first phase of the 30-day stay-at-home order and that this week will be a test to determine the Territory’s next steps in dealing with COVID-19.

“We are by no means out of the woods yet. It is clear from the experience of our brothers and sisters in the BVI that you can’t hide out forever from this virus. It will sit in wait for you,” Governor Bryan said. “I am asking for your help in doing the right thing and encouraging your neighbor to do the right thing. Stay at home when you are sick, practice social distancing, wash your hands and abide by the regulations that we have set forth for your safety and for the safety of our entire Territory.”

Governor Bryan’s next briefing is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday.

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