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Governor Bryan Eases Some Restrictions During ‘Safer at Home’ Phase on Path to New Normal

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS — During his covid-19 briefing Thursday, Governor Albert Bryan Jr. eased some restrictions during the “Safer at Home” phase on the path to a New Normal, saying that hotels can take reservations for residents and business travel and that dive shops, day sails and excursions can operate under the same conditions as other nonessential businesses already allowed to reopen.

“It is our hope that we can add some relief and activity in these most stressful times,” the Governor said. “So, if you have been displaced out of your home for some reason or you just want to spend the weekend away from your home, you can do that.”

Stimulus checks

- Checks will begin rolling out next week.
- Payments will be made to residents who filed their 2018 taxes in the Virgin islands and will be received via check.
- The Lieutenant Governor’s Office is asking stimulus check recipients to use a banking app or an ATM, if possible, to deposit checks.

Masks

- Proprietors should exercise judgement in allowing people who can’t wear a mask because of respiratory issues into their establishment. At the very least, a customer presenting an inhaler as proof of their condition should be enough to get them admitted into the store.

- Individuals who can't wear a mask should spend as little time as possible inside a business and get a doctor's note as a means of proving they suffer from respiratory ailments.
- Free "No Mask, No Service" signs for businesses are available at Property and Procurement and DLCA offices in both districts. Business owners should call all 340-727-7226 on St. Croix or 340-771-7226 in the St. Thomas-St. John District.
- Masks that cover the entire head, such as ski masks or masks that cover more than the bridge of your nose, are prohibited.

"These masks not only pose a serious threat to store owners, as people look similar to armed robbers, but they propose a serious threat to the wearer, as you may be mistakenly identified as a perpetrator and end up getting assaulted or shot," Governor Bryan said. "Please wear your masks responsibly."

Google

- Google is helping the USVI by optimizing local information and websites on their search engine for residents to easily find accurate local information.

"The thing we have learned throughout this pandemic is that the best defense against the spread of this virus in our community is our residents having access to accurate and reliable information about the virus and how to protect themselves and their loved ones," Governor Bryan said.

Unemployment benefits

- Applications continue to be processed, and, to date, the Labor Department has received 7,727 unemployment applications, 3,000 paper applications and 4,727 online applications.
- 64 % of the online applications are from the St. Thomas-St. John District and 36% are from the St. Croix District.
- To date, the Virgin Islands Labor Department has processed 3,100 checks totaling \$2.1 million in unemployment benefits.
- Unemployment benefit checks are a form of taxable income, and a considerable amount of money to be paid in taxes will be required on the next income tax filing for those who don't opt to withhold taxes from the checks on the front end.

COVID-19 cases

- Currently tracking 7 active cases
- 1,112 individuals tested to date
- 1,006 of those tests were negative
- 66 tests came back positive
- 40 tests are pending
- 4 fatalities to date

- Two COVID-19 patients, including one on a ventilator, are hospitalized at Juan F. Luis Hospital on St. Croix and there are no patients hospitalized at Schneider Regional Medical Center on St. Thomas.

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