



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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 13, 2020

Press Contact

Richard Motta Jr.

340-474-2399

www.vi.gov

richard.mottajr@go.vi.gov

Governor Bryan Orders Return to “Stay at Home” Status In Response to Continuing Spread of COVID-19

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS – In an effort to stop the spread of COVID-19 in the U.S. Virgin Islands, Governor Albert Bryan Jr. has ordered the Territory to return to “Stay at Home” status, or the orange level, which means the closure of non-essential businesses, restaurants limited to take-out, delivery or drive-through service and prohibiting hotels, villas, Airbnbs, temporary vacation housing and charter vessels and similar businesses from accepting leisure travel reservations.

The prohibition of new leisure travel reservations is effective immediately, and on Wednesday, August 19, 2020, those businesses are prohibited from admitting any new check-ins or registering any new guests for 30 days unless the order is lifted sooner. The new restriction does not apply to business travelers, , emergency personnel, flight crews or government guests with written authorization from the government agency they are visiting.

“When we announced our COVID-19 alert system in May, I indicated at that time that we would retreat back to a more cautious state of alert if conditions warranted. Unfortunately, we have arrived at that point this week,” Governor Bryan said during a press conference Thursday afternoon.

“The recent infiltration of the virus into our residential institutions that house vulnerable members of our population creates an alarming level of risk,” the Governor said. “This adds to the stress of the ongoing pandemic response that seemingly has no end in sight and is wearing out our healthcare and public safety infrastructure.”

Beginning Monday, August 17, 2020, all non-essential businesses and churches are ordered to cease operations and the public is ordered to stay at home. A number of businesses are exempt from closure (see included list) but must still operate with the recommended social distancing requirement of 6 feet or more between individuals.

Also beginning Monday, August 17 and lasting until August 31 unless earlier lifted, all restaurants in the Territory can operate only take out, delivery or drive-through service. All bars, nightclubs and cabarets are to remain closed so long as the Territory remains in a State of Emergency.

Additionally, all taxis and safaris are limited to half capacity as long as the Territory remains in a State of Emergency.

The prohibition against mass gatherings remains in effect; however, under the “Stay at Home” status, mass gatherings are defined as any event or convening that brings together more than 10 persons in a single room. A mass gathering does not include operations for standard essential services and infrastructure, such as grocery stores and bi-box stores, airports and seaports or medical facilities.

Other restrictions that go into effect on Monday, August 17 and lasting until August 31, unless lifted earlier, are:

- All beaches will close at noon until 6 a.m. to following day on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays. Only fishermen may be on the beach during the beach closure to access their vessels or cast their nets.
- All public, private and parochial school campuses will be closed for students.
- The face mask requirements set forth in the 12th Supplemental Executive Order on August 10, which establishes fines for failing to comply with masking requirements, remain in effect.

DOH inspections of sanitization equipment

Also beginning Monday, August 17, the Virgin Islands Department of Health will begin inspections of all glassware and utensils sanitization equipment and procedures in licensed restaurants, either by request or incidental inspections.

The purpose of the inspections is to certify whether such dishwashing and sanitization equipment meets Department of Health requirements and could result in the establishment being exempt from the required use of disposable dishes, utensils, napkins and drink containers.

Upon certification that a licensed restaurant’s dishwashing procedures meet the Department of Health requirements and the lifting of the dine-in suspension, said restaurant shall immediately be issued an exemption certificate.

#####