



**GOVERNMENT OF
THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES**

VIRGIN ISLANDS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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PRESS RELEASE

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November 7, 2020

DOH Issues Public Health Order, Clarifies Soccer Season is Not Permitted to Start

St. Croix, US Virgin Islands (November 7, 2020) – The Department of Health (DOH) clarifies that no team sports activities are currently permitted. An announcement by the Virgin Islands Soccer Association that the season will begin results from a misunderstanding that led them to plan the season, thinking that permission had been granted.

According to Justa E. Encarnacion, Commissioner of Health and Incident Commander, it had not been approved. Respecting the work that had gone into preparing for Sunday's game, one game was allowed under strict precautions and monitoring. In response to the misunderstanding this created about which sports activities are permitted in the territory, the Department of Health issued new guidance, "*Public Health Pandemic Order No. X*," portions of which are listed below. At this time, only "low risk" sports and sports-related activity are permitted.

In a clarification letter, the Commissioner advises, "We look forward to continuing to work with the association and any other sports organizations as long as the pandemic continues, to ensure that we are following CDC guidance and that we support sports and other activities at the appropriate time. The safety and health of all of our residents and the community at large is our top priority and our mandate." She added that DOH would keep sports associations informed of the outcomes of virtual meetings with the CDC regarding sports.

Excerpt from Public Health Pandemic Order NO. X :

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The Centers for Disease Control has determined that the risk of COVID-19 spread can be different, depending on the type of activity categorized as:

- **Lowest Risk:** Performing skill-building drills or conditioning at home, alone or with members of the same household
- **Increasing Risk:** Team-based practice
- **More Risk:** Within-team competition
- **Higher Risk:** Full competition between teams from the same local geographic area (e.g., city or county)
- **Highest Risk:** Full competition between teams from different geographic areas (e.g., outside county or state)

Only LOW-RISK sports are permitted. (Examples include: baseball, softball, bowling, golf, cross country, swimming, tennis, table tennis, pool, track and field, competitive cheerleading, and training exercises for higher risk sports that do not include player contact or actual games.)

HIGH-RISK sports are prohibited. All organized team sports, to include leagues, “pick-up games,” scholastic athletic associations, but not exclusive to those named, are prohibited from conducting games and organized group activities.

Violators may be penalized as follows:

- \$1000 per participant for violation of the mass gathering prohibitions
- \$5000 per organizer of any mass gathering that violates the prohibitions
- The immediate closure of the event.

If you or a loved one show COVID-19 symptoms or have been in “close contact” with someone who tested positive for COVID-19, isolate from others, and call the Department of Health at 340-712-6299 or 340-776-1519. If you have a medical emergency, call 911 and let them know if you may have COVID-19.

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