



**THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS**  
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## **Governor Bryan Closes Territorial Beaches Until April 20**

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS—Governor Albert Bryan Jr. on Monday closed all the beaches in the Territory until April 20 in an attempt at curbing the COVID-19 virus and as a way to discourage some residents from ignoring the stay-at-home order and negating social and physical distancing.

“We have a considerable way to go before we reach our peak, which is projected not to be here for another two to three weeks,” Governor Bryan said during Monday’s press briefing at Government House in Christiansted.

To date, 283 individuals have been tested for the Coronavirus, with 222 testing negative, 43 testing positive and 20 tests still pending. Of the 43 positive cases, 36 of those individuals have recovered, one person has died and six other active cases are being closely monitored by the Virgin Islands Department of Health. Of those six cases, one patient is hospitalized with COVID-19 at Juan F. Luis Hospital on St. Croix and two patients with COVID-19 are hospitalized at Schneider Regional Medical Center on St. Thomas.

“For the most part, we have done good as a community in following the Department of Health and CDC guidance to help contain the spread of the virus, but we still have some in our community who are not taking this seriously enough,” Governor Bryan said.

“Effective today, we are closing all beaches in the Territory. This order will remain in effect through Monday, April 20,” Governor Bryan said. “The Virgin islands National Guard will be deployed to support VIPD and DPNR to enforce this order.”

The Governor expressed regret that the Easter holiday would be impacted by the spread of COVID-19; however, he reiterated that all places of worship must remain closed during the stay-at-home order, which is in effect until April 30.

“We applaud the churches and houses of worship that have found creative ways to allow the members of their congregations to continue practicing their faith during this time of great tribulation,” Governor Bryan said.

During the press briefing, Health Commissioner Justa Encarnacion discussed the recent change in guidance by the CDC regarding the use of masks. The purpose of the new CDC recommendation is to slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others.

“The use of face coverings is a voluntary public health measure. We currently have no mandates to wear masks,” Commissioner Encarnacion said. “We do recommend that you utilize a face mask if you are ill or if you will be in close contact with someone who is elderly or has a compromised immune system.”

Before signing off to take questions from the media, Governor Bryan thanked the brave health care workers on the front line of the fight against COVID-19 and once again urged residents to stay at home.

“The White House is referring to the next two weeks as the nation’s next 9-11 or Pearl Harbor moment,” Governor Bryan said. “We can’t afford a 9-11 or Pearl Harbor here in the Territory, so I am appealing to you, tell your friends, your family and your loved ones to do the right thing and to stay at home.”

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