



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

**VIRGIN ISLANDS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER**

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PUBLIC HEALTH ORDER No. XIX

WHEREAS Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a severe acute respiratory illness that can spread among humans through respiratory transmission and presents itself with symptoms similar to those of influenza; and

WHEREAS, the President of the United States has declared a National Disaster related to the COVID-19 pandemic in the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, individuals in the Territory of the Virgin Islands have been pre-emptively isolated and tested for COVID-19, and the CDC currently recommends mitigation measures in communities with potential COVID-19 cases, including staying at home when sick, keeping away from others who are sick and staying at home when a household member is sick with respiratory disease symptoms or if instructed to do so by public health officials or a health care provider; and

WHEREAS it is necessary and appropriate to take action to ensure that COVID-19 remains controlled and that residents and visitors in the U.S. Virgin Islands remain safe and secure; and

WHEREAS, The Governor of the Virgin Islands, Albert Bryan, Jr. on March 13, 2020, declared a State of Emergency in the Virgin Islands due to COVID-19 and appointed the Commissioner of Health as the incident commander and the Department of Health as the lead agency in the territorial response to the pandemic;

WHEREAS, the Governor of the United States Virgin Islands, in order to protect the lives and property of the residents of the Territory may activate all necessary and possible territorial resources under the executive branch, other agencies, instrumentalities, and partners to complete the preparation necessary to protect life and property;

WHEREAS it is necessary to impose guidelines and restrictions to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of the Territory from the potentially dangerous effects of the COVID-19 – Coronavirus Pandemic; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with Title 3, Section 418(5) & (6) and Title 23, Section 1033(b) of the Virgin Islands Code, the Incident Commander is to take all actions necessary to protect the public health; and


WHEREAS all vessels within a 12-mile radius, operating within Territorial waters must comply with the laws of the United States Virgin Islands. While federal laws govern ferry operations, these vessels are not exempt from local law and Titles 12 and 25 of the Virgin Islands Code explicitly identifies the statutory authority of the Government of the Virgin Islands over **all** vessels in its jurisdiction.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Justa E. Encarnacion, Commissioner of Health of the United States Virgin Islands and Incident Commander for the U.S. Virgin Islands during the State of Health Emergency Due To Covid-19 – Coronavirus Pandemic, by virtue of the authority granted to me by Title 3, Section 418 and Title 19, Section 2 of the Virgin Islands Code, Title 19, Section 001-000 of the Virgin Islands Rules and Regulations, and Executive Order and Proclamation Declaring a State of Emergency in response to the COVID-19 – CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC issued on March 13, 2020, in order to protect the public health during the State of Emergency, do hereby **ORDER** as follows:

TO: Car Ferry/Passenger Ferry Service Providers,

- All Ferry/ Sea Transportation vessels shall operate in the United States Virgin Islands at 75% capacity of the rated capacity by United States Coast Guard or 100 persons (including passengers and crew), whichever is less.
- All persons, to wit, crew and passengers entering the terminals, waiting areas and aboard vessels shall wear masks or face coverings and adhere to the social distancing rule of no less than six feet apart from the time of entry into the terminal, onboard the vessel, and until disembarkation and departure from the terminal.
- All persons to wit, crew and passengers boarding the ferries shall use safe hand hygiene practices (use of hand sanitizer is appropriate) while boarding.
- All passengers are encouraged to remain in their vehicles while on the car ferry.
- Ferry/ Sea Transportation vessels that fail to comply with this order will be fined \$1000.00 for each offense and \$100.00 per passenger.

I SO ORDER, in Christiansted, St. Croix, Virgin Islands, this the 27th day of October, A.D., 2021.


Justa E. Encarnacion, RN, BSN, MBA/HCM
Commissioner/Territorial Health Official