



VITEMA VIRGIN ISLANDS TERRITORIAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

8221 NISKY, ST. THOMAS, VI 00802
TEL. (340) 774-2244 FAX (340) 714-4470

2164 KING CROSS ST., CHRISTIANSTED, VI 00820
TEL. (340) 773-2244 FAX (340) 778-8980

6 SUSANNABERG, ST. JOHN, VI 00830
TEL. (340) 776-6444 FAX (340) 779-4266

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Press Contact:

Garry Green

(340) 713-6803

www.vitema.vi.gov

garry.green@vitema.vi.gov

VITEMA Remains Focused on Risk Planning in the Territory

U.S. Virgin Islands – The Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA) is making sure that all risk planning for the 2020 Atlantic Hurricane Season remains uninterrupted during the Territory’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

June 1 marks the official start of the Atlantic Hurricane Season, which ends on November 30. VITEMA announced it has been coordinating with other agencies to host the Annual Hurricane Preparedness Meeting while supporting other COVID-19 missions in the upcoming weeks.

“The benefit to this layered approach allows the overlaps of efforts from one threat to assist us with the other,” says VITEMA Director Daryl D. Jaschen. “Agencies, Departments, Federal and Territorial partners are in a state of constant communication and coordination and this gives us an advantage this hurricane season.”

In 2019, VITEMA continued its bi-annual issuance of Hurricane Season Curfew Passes. Curfew Passes issued last year remain valid until December 31 of this year. Acceptance and processing of Curfew Pass applications remains suspended until after April 30. In the event of a pending emergency, we will assess the need to issue passes and notify the public accordingly.

To ensure that emergency communication systems are ready for execution, VITEMA hosted Alert VI training, made available to all agency Public Information Officers. From this preparation, there will be more opportunity for an all-hands on deck approach, should it become necessary.

Along with Agency and Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) trainings, VITEMA is focusing on key areas to be affected by hurricane flooding through recent participation in the Plan to Protect Mitigation Workshop assembled by the Virgin Islands Department of Health.

The coordination of managing these two risks is all a part of what VITEMA is designed to do but community compliance will be crucial to these efforts. The community is asked to comply with the Governor Albert Bryan Jr.’s mandate and stay indoors while government agencies embark on the next stage of its multi-hazard preparedness planning.

While residents are staying home and exercising social distancing, it is recommended to make sure that emergency preparations are being addressed. Assess emergency go-bags and supplies, complete home repairs, review family communication and unification plans and sign up for Alert VI today by visiting www.vitema.vi.gov.

“This is undoubtedly a difficult time for many in the Territory, but the community should rest assured that VITEMA is moving forward with our preparedness planning from the medical, response, and resource perspective,” said Jaschen. “This may feel extremely difficult to navigate, but the territory will get through this point in our history.”

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