

Image not found or type unknown

V.I. Dept. of Tourism Launches Online Pre-Screen Portal for Incoming Travelers

Experience the USVI / **Published On July 25, 2020 06:16 AM /**

Staff Consortium **July 25, 2020**

Image not found or type unknown



The V.I. Department of Tourism has announced the launch of what it says is phase one of a new online portal that will prescreen and assist with the certification process of all travelers prior to their arrival in the territory. The goal is to reduce the spread of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), the department said.

The U.S. Virgin Islands Travel Screening Portal facilitates pre-arrival processing, thereby improving efficiency, reducing delays, and providing a more seamless traveler experience, according to the release.

The development process will next integrate mobile optimization for the portal, followed by a hybrid mobile application launch, and artificial intelligence to automate the processing of

laboratory test results from travelers visiting from highly impacted states and territories, D.O.T. said.

The secure portal, a result of the coordinated efforts of the Office of the Governor, the Virgin Islands Department of Health, the Virgin Islands Port Authority, the Ports of the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Department of Tourism can be found at www.usviupdate.com/travelportal.

D.O.T. said the Government of the U.S. Virgin Islands will provide oversight with respect to Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) compliance and other best practices to ensure the confidentiality and privacy of user information and personal data, and the overall integrity of the process.

Upon visiting the portal, all travelers will be greeted with a welcome that guides them through a series of screens, including General Information, Terms and Conditions, Traveler Information, and the COVID-19 Traveler Screening Tool. After travelers from highly impacted areas upload their COVID-19 test results, the information submitted will be processed in 24-48 hours and a certification code issued immediately upon completion, D.O.T. said.

For most travelers, the portal screening and certification will eventually replace the existing manual procedure, which requires the physical completion and review of the COVID-19 Traveler Screening Tool at the territory's ports of entry, according to the department. Once the passenger arrives, the Virgin Islands Port Authority, in conjunction with the Department of Health and the Virgin Islands National Guard, will process the traveler using the validation generated from the portal in addition to performing temperature checks with a thermal scanner.

"Our team has been working tirelessly to adapt to a rapidly changing operational environment in this 'Open Doors' phase of the pandemic," said D.O.T. Commissioner Joseph Boschulte. "We continue to update our practices and procedures as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and local health officials."

The commissioner is said to have applauded the efforts of the interagency teams and stated that the online portal, which prescreens all travelers and validates COVID-19 test results, is another positive step towards keeping residents and visitors safe, according to D.O.T.

Any traveler aged 15 and older whose home state (state of residence) has a COVID-19 positivity rate greater than 10 percent will be required to produce a negative COVID-19 antigen (molecular/PCR/rapid) test result received within five days prior to travel to the U.S. Virgin Islands or a positive COVID-19 antibody test result received within four months of travel to the Territory. Currently, residents of Puerto Rico are also subject to this requirement.

COVID-19 test results are also required from travelers, 15 years old and older, who have spent more than seven days in and are traveling from a state with a positivity rate greater than 10 percent. Positivity rates used are according to data and analysis from Johns Hopkins University: <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/testing/tracker/overview>.

For further guidance, the USVI's Travel Advisory can be reviewed at: <https://bit.ly/2CChShf>.

For more information, visit www.usviupdate.com or email info@usviupdate.com.