

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Woman Charged With Neglect After Wandering Child Found and Returned For "Fifth or Sixth Time," According to Police

Frequent incidents involving unsupervised child at Quickserve Service Station lead to police action

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Mugshot of Priscilla Reed. By. THE VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE DEPARTMENT

ST. CROIX — A woman is facing charges of child neglect after two of her children were found wandering around the community.

According to court documents, last Saturday afternoon, police were summoned to the Quickserve Service Station in Frederiksted by a shop attendant, who told them of a 15-year old boy with developmental challenges who frequents the gas station and picks up items without paying for them. The boy said the attendant spends extended periods of time at the service station with no adult supervision.

The employee said that he has made several calls to the police about the boy, and has also spoken to the child's mother, Priscilla Reed, about the situation. Ms. Reed becomes confrontational when this occurs, the attendant told officers. On this occasion, the boy had reportedly been at the gas station for over an hour before police were called. Ms. Reed had not made contact with the 911 Emergency Call Center regarding the whereabouts of her son, police verified with authorities at the call center.

After speaking with the gas station attendant, police took the boy to the Wilbur H. Francis Command police station and contacted a social worker from the Department of Human Services.

According to documents presented in court, this is a known and recurring problem. Officers of the Wilbur H. Francis Command police station say this is the fifth or sixth time they have had to deal with the issue, most recently in late October. On that day, not only did they have to remove the boy from the service station, but on their way to deliver him back to his residence they met his stepfather, who told them that another of Mr. Reed's children was missing.

The six-year old minor was subsequently located walking near the Lorraine Village Housing Community. Police say that the Department of Human Services was informed of the incident, and DHS officials told police that there was already an open case with Child Protective Services involving Ms. Reed.

Police say they have spoken to Ms. Reed several times about implementing a safety plan for her home, which would include additional security features for her front door, a name-tag for the 15-year old with information about his address, allergies, and parents. The boy reportedly walks in the middle of the road while on his way to the service station, a circumstance concerned neighbors have said poses a serious safety hazard to himself and to other road users.

On Saturday, officers found Ms. Reed walking from the park with her partner and her four other children. She was arrested and charged with child neglect and subsequently remanded into custody ahead of her initial court appearance.

In court on Monday, judge Ernest Morris found probable cause to uphold the charge against her, and ordered that Ms. Reed be released ahead of trial once she signs an unsecured bond for the \$50,000 bail requirement. Her next court appearance is scheduled for December 13.