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Government Offices, Schools, and Banks Closed as Tropical Storm Ernesto Impacts USVI

All government offices, schools, and banks closed in response to storm; flash flood warnings remain active; UVI and VIDE provide specific closures and instructions; banks offer online and mobile services for continuity

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Trees fell on the Queen Mary Highway in Whim, St. Croix, caused by winds of TS Ernesto.

Following the aftermath of Tropical Storm Ernesto, significant closures and advisories have been announced across the U.S. Virgin Islands to ensure public safety and facilitate recovery efforts.

Government Offices

All government offices in the U.S. Virgin Islands remain closed today due to the ongoing impact of Tropical Storm Ernesto. Residents are urged to stay off the roads as flash flood warnings remain active. Initial damage assessments are currently in progress.

University of the Virgin Islands

The University of the Virgin Islands (UVI) has announced that both campuses will be closed today as a precautionary measure following the passage of Tropical Storm Ernesto. Essential staff are asked to report to work at noon to assess and prepare the campuses for reopening. The UVI community is encouraged to monitor university communications for updates, which will be provided by the end of the day. Status updates will be available on the homepage of the UVI website, www.uvi.edu, and on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. For campus-specific inquiries, hotline numbers are available: (340) 693-1016 for St. Thomas and (340) 692-4168 for St. Croix. UVI students and employees are also urged to sign up for Bucs Alert, UVI's emergency notification system, for critical information via text messages and email.

The V.I. Dept. of Education

The Virgin Islands Department of Education has announced that all public schools will remain closed on Wednesday, August 14, 2024, due to the ongoing weather conditions caused by Tropical Storm Ernesto. The safety and well-being of students, faculty, and staff are the top priorities. Non-essential school faculty and staff are advised not to report to their respective campuses, while essential personnel such as principals, assistant principals, custodians, maintenance workers, and laborers should stay alert for further instructions regarding campus assessments. Additional updates regarding work operations will be provided for non-essential employees at both district and state levels.

Banking Operations

- **FirstBank U.S. Virgin Islands:** All FirstBank branches will remain closed on Wednesday, August 14, 2024. Phone services will be available through the FirstLine Solutions Center at 1-866-695-2511 from 10:00 a.m. Digital banking services via 1firstbank.com and the Digital Banking Mobile Banking App will remain accessible 24/7. Clients can also make deposits at ATMs with First Deposit, subject to weather conditions and power availability. Updates will be provided via local media and official social media channels.
- **Popular Bank:** All Popular branches in the Virgin Islands (USVI and BVI) will close at 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 13, 2024, and remain closed on Wednesday, August 14. Normal operations are expected to resume on Thursday, August 15. Clients can continue to use online banking services through Mi Banco Mobile, Mi Banco Online, and other digital banking platforms. For assistance, customers can call 1-888-724-3655 or email internet@bpr.com.
- **Oriental Bank:** Oriental Bank's St. Thomas and St. Croix branches will be closed on Wednesday, August 14, due to Tropical Storm Ernesto. The branches are expected to reopen on Thursday. Customers are encouraged to stay updated through Oriental Bank's Facebook page and utilize online and mobile banking services, which offer 24/7 access to account balances, payments, transfers, and transaction verification. The automated voice

system is also available for customer service by calling 787-766-4999.

Residents are urged to stay safe, adhere to advisories, and keep informed through official channels as the territory continues to manage the impact of Tropical Storm Ernesto.

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