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Covid-19: BVI to Extend Allotted Layoff Period For Workers

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TORTOLA, British Virgin Island, CMC – The government of the British Virgin Islands is now working to extend the maximum allotted layoff period in the territory.

According to Labour Minister Vincent Wheatley, the move is one of many precautionary measures taken by government to protect businesses and employees during the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

“Section 107 of the Labour Code 2010 speaks to employers having the option to temporarily lay off employees for a period of three months, after that period an employer either has to return the employee to work or terminate the employee and give a severance package,” Wheatley stated.

“However, the Department of Labour and Workforce Development is working on an extension of this period for particular industries affected by COVID19 on a case-by-case basis to secure jobs for the people of the Virgin Islands,” the minister added.

He encouraged employers to develop the necessary appropriate arrangements during this period to ensure the survival of their business in the aftermath of the virus.

He also said that his department is working on special provisions to help protect elderly employees, as they are the persons most at risk of COVID-19.

As it relates to the Immigration Department, Wheatley said they are working on extending work permits, which will also be done on a case-by-case basis.

He further said the Immigration Department will also be granting access into the territory for specialised services critical to COVID-19 and not he'd that the measure is another one that would be done case by case.