

Wyndham St. Thomas Faces Lawsuit After Guest Suffers Hip Fracture in Fall at Limetree Beach Resort

Terry DeVerna of Washington fractured her hip after falling on unmarked, poorly lit steps at Limetree Beach Resort. The lawsuit alleges dangerous room design, failure to provide first aid, and gross negligence by Wyndham St. Thomas.

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Limetree Beach Resort in St. Thomas.

A complaint has been filed against Wyndham St. Thomas, operating as Limetree Beach Resort, after a guest suffered serious injuries as a result of a fall.

Washington resident Terry DeVerna came to the Virgin Islands last month, checking into the resort on August 10. The room to which she and her husband were assigned has a two-step

descent from the bedroom to the kitchenette.

According to the District Court lawsuit, all the tile from bedroom to kitchenette is the same, including the tiles on the risers. The stair area is also allegedly poorly illuminated. These factors, along with the lack of a handrail or other visual cue including contrasting markings or tread on the steps themselves, render the steps barely visible.

On the couple's first night at the hotel, Ms. DeVerna woke up around 11 p.m. and went to use the bathroom, which required her to go through the kitchenette, according to court documents. Not realizing there were two steps down from the bedroom, she reportedly misjudged the descent, lost her balance, and fell into the kitchenette, "landing hard and fracturing her hip," the civil complaint says.

With his wife in "immediate and severe pain," the woman's husband quickly realized that not only was there no in-room phone to call down to the front desk, there was no cellular reception in the room either. He went down himself to ask for help but found no staff on duty. A call using the red emergency phone by the pool also went unanswered.

A security guard was eventually found, and 911 was called. However, "EMS responders had difficulty navigating the room layout with a backboard due to the cramped quarters and unsafe step configuration," the lawsuit says. Ms. DeVerna underwent hip-repair surgery two days after the fall.

The lawsuit also alleges that Limetree Beach's manager admitted that the steps were "dangerous and tough to navigate," telling the woman's husband that all the rooms at the resort had the same layout where that was concerned. The complaint notes that a similar lawsuit was filed against Wyndham St. Thomas two years ago. The 2023 suit, filed in Superior Court by the same attorney currently representing Ms. DeVerna, was jointly dismissed by the parties after successful mediation. Ms. DeVerna emphasizes in her complaint that this proves Wyndham has had full knowledge of the danger their rooms pose to guests, but yet failed to make any changes to increase safety where this is concerned.

Ms. DeVerna has accused Wyndham St. Thomas of failure to render first aid and gross negligence, and argues that premises liability should apply as well. She is seeking compensatory and punitive damages following a jury trial on the issues. As of press time, Wyndham St. Thomas has not yet filed a response with the court.