

The Virgin Islands Consortium

VI National Guard to Help Screen Incoming Airline Passengers at Territory's Airports

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The military is gearing up begin health screening of airline passengers arriving at Virgin Islands airports.

Members of the V.I. National Guard met at the Henry E. Rohlsen Airport on St. Croix to walk through screening protocols last week as part of the joint anti-coronavirus (Covid-19) initiative with the Department of Health, according to the V.I. National Guard. The screenings are added steps intended to slow the spread of Covid-19 exposure and infections.

Screenings at the Rohlson and Cyril King Airport on St. Thomas will, ostensibly, identify passengers who could possibly be infected with the Covid-19, V.I.N.G. said.

"Due to the unknown status of the passengers, directly after offloading the aircraft, each passenger will fill out a checklist immediately," stated Col. Ivan Udell, director of operations.

After being evaluated using the screening checklist by an appropriate representative, the passenger will be instructed to contact the Department of Health Epidemiology COVID-19 Call Center if they present signs for concern. Those not exhibiting any symptoms will be instructed to depart the airport and follow the stay at home directives and monitor themselves for the next 14 days as the COVID-19 Health Alert indicates.

Brig. Gen. (VI) Kodjo S. Knox-Limbacker, the adjutant general, along with key personnel, war-gamed the strategy with other agencies to man, resource, properly configure, and secure testing sites. Each local and federal government agencies' convey methods to maintain crowd control, and facilitate a smooth operation, according to V.I.N.G.

A rehearsal of concept was conducted to include possible scenarios and resolutions. "It is a process that is still in planning motion; however, as we go along, we will devise plans to make it better," said Command Sgt. Maj. Kent Bellot, state command sergeant major.

"We recently had a sufficient amount of supplies delivered today, and are currently awaiting the electronic scanners. In the near future, we should be able to have our equipment set up to can scan crowds as they come off the plane to detect temperatures of passengers as they offload more quickly," stated Limbacker.

Agency partners in attendance were the Virgin Islands Department of Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency, Virgin Islands Port Authority, Puerto Rico Disaster Medical Assistant Team, United States Customs and Border Protection, and Airport Operations.