

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Aging Sewer Lines, Equipment Failure Strain VIWMA Response Across Virgin Islands

WMA said underground sewer line failures are increasing across the VI as an aging wastewater system collapses and recent equipment problems slow repairs, though officials say a broader infrastructure replacement effort is set to begin in the coming months

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The V.I. Waste Management Authority says a recent increase in underground sewer line failures across the territory is being driven by an aging wastewater system that has outlived its intended lifespan, with pipes now collapsing at what the agency described as an alarming rate.

In a public notice issued Wednesday, WMA said the failures have affected several neighborhoods across the Virgin Islands and acknowledged the disruption caused when residents encounter sewage on streets near their homes and businesses. The authority said it takes those conditions very seriously.

According to WMA, the problem did not develop overnight, but the effects are being felt now. The authority said that immediate impact remains its central concern as crews respond across the territory.

Waste Management said its ability to respond has also been complicated by the unexpected failure of critical repair equipment. However, the authority said those repairs are nearing completion and that it expects the equipment to be fully operational within the week, a development it said will significantly improve response capacity.

Until then, the agency said its teams are working throughout the territory to address the most urgent and highest-risk situations first, particularly those affecting public health, public safety and heavily populated areas. WMA said the scale of the problem, combined with the size of its workforce, requires a prioritized and strategic response so that the areas of greatest need can be addressed as quickly and effectively as possible.

At the same time, the authority said the current effort is not limited to short-term response. WMA said contracts have already been executed for a comprehensive, territory-wide replacement of aging sewer infrastructure.

That work is expected to begin in the coming months, the authority said, and is intended to provide a long-term solution to the same problems now affecting communities.

WMA asked the public for patience as it works through the immediate challenges, saying its teams are fully engaged and committed to restoring normal conditions as quickly as possible while also laying the foundation for a more reliable wastewater system in the future.

Residents are being encouraged to report active sewer issues by calling 340-715-9100 in St. Thomas or 340-712-4962 in St. Croix. Reports can also be submitted by email to communications@viwma.org or customer_care@viwma.org so they can be logged, tracked and addressed.