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Bryan Signs Executive Order Banning Firearms in Government Buildings Across USVI

The executive order prohibits employees, contractors, visitors, and the public from carrying firearms or ammunition inside government buildings and interior offices, while allowing limited exceptions for law enforcement and certain approved waivers.

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Governor Albert Bryan Jr. By. GOV'T HOUSE.

Governor Albert Bryan Jr. has signed an executive order establishing a territory-wide firearms policy for government buildings and workspaces, creating a uniform rule that prohibits most people from carrying firearms or ammunition inside those spaces, regardless of whether they hold a concealed carry license or another firearm license.

The order applies to government employees, contractors, visitors, and members of the public, while creating limited exceptions for law enforcement acting in an official capacity and for certain written waivers approved by the attorney general and police commissioner.

According to the administration, Executive Order No. 546-2026 amends Executive Order No. 54-1961, the longstanding policy governing the responsibilities and conduct of Government of the Virgin Islands officers and employees. The new firearms policy will be incorporated into the Government Employees Handbook and applies in government buildings and interior offices across the territory.

Governor Bryan said the order was intended to address what he described as a basic but important policy gap. He said government buildings are public workplaces where residents seek services, employees perform essential duties, and official proceedings take place, but that the Government of the Virgin Islands had not previously adopted a uniform policy governing firearms in those spaces.

“Government has a responsibility to look ahead, identify gaps, and act before those gaps become problems,” Governor Bryan said. “This executive order is a practical, commonsense step to make sure our employees, residents, and visitors know what to expect when they enter a government facility. These are places where the public’s business is conducted, and clear safety standards matter.”

Under the order, officers and employees of the Government of the Virgin Islands, contractors, visitors, and members of the public may not carry, possess, or have a firearm or ammunition in any government building or interior office, including adjacent secured areas used for official proceedings. The restriction applies whether or not a person has an active concealed carry license or another firearm license.

The order provides two limited exceptions. It does not apply to duly sworn law enforcement or peace officers acting within the scope of their official duties. It also permits a licensed gun owner to obtain a limited Attorney General Government Building Waiver when there is a specific need and when safety considerations justify it. Such waivers must be approved in writing by both the attorney general of the Virgin Islands and the Virgin Islands police commissioner, must be issued for a specified purpose, may not exceed 12 months, and may be revoked in writing by the attorney general at any time.

“This policy respects the difference between responsible firearm ownership and the need to maintain safe, orderly public facilities,” Governor Bryan said. “It does not take away anyone’s rights. It simply makes clear that government buildings are not ordinary spaces. They are workplaces, service centers, hearing rooms, offices, and places where sensitive public matters are handled every day.”

For purposes of the order, a government building includes any permanent or temporary structure, or any portion of a structure, that is owned, leased, operated, or controlled by the Government of the Virgin Islands and used for official government functions. The release says that includes administrative offices, executive branch agency buildings, semi-autonomous agency buildings, legislative facilities, courthouses, hearing rooms, judicial and quasi-judicial chambers, interior corridors, lobbies, secured screening areas, and rooms or spaces where government employees perform their official duties.

According to the administration, employee violations may result in disciplinary action up to and including removal, in addition to any other remedies available under law.

The release says the order comes as the territory continues broader efforts to update and modernize its firearm carry laws. Earlier this year, the administration proposed the Second Amendment Rights and Public Safety Act, described as a comprehensive measure to update the Virgin Islands Code and provide clearer rules for firearm ownership, licensing, registration, concealed carry, safe storage, and sensitive places where firearms may not be carried.

Government House said that proposal was developed in partnership with the V.I. Department of Justice and with the support of Senators Angel Bolques and Clifford Joseph. The administration said it reflects several years of work to build a firearm framework that is clear, enforceable, and suited to the territory's needs.

Governor Bryan said the executive order is part of the same broader approach.

“We cannot govern by waiting for confusion or conflict to force our hand,” he said. “Responsible leadership means putting clear policies in place before there is a crisis. This order gives employees, residents, visitors, agency heads, and law enforcement a consistent rule to follow.”

The governor said his administration will continue working with the Legislature, the Department of Justice, the Virgin Islands Police Department, and other stakeholders on firearm laws meant to protect rights, support public safety, and provide clearer guidance to the community.

“This is the kind of practical work government is supposed to do,” Governor Bryan said. “It is not complicated. Employees deserve safe workplaces. Residents deserve safe public offices. Law enforcement deserves clear rules. And the public deserves a government willing to act thoughtfully and ahead of the curve.”

Executive Order No. 546-2026 took effect upon execution.