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VITEMA Announces Territory-Wide Open Fire Ban After Red Flag Conditions Raise Wildfire Risk

The burn ban began June 15 and applies to campfires, bonfires, trash, yard debris and brush burning after gusty winds and low humidity prompted a red flag warning for St. Croix over the weekend.

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A territory-wide ban on open fires took effect June 15 and will remain in place until further notice, according to V.I. Territorial Emergency Management Agency Executive Director Daryl Jaschen.

Speaking during the administration's weekly press briefing, Mr. Jaschen announced the ban Monday, saying it follows dangerous weekend conditions that prompted the National Weather Service to issue a "red flag" warning for St. Croix on Saturday.

The warning was triggered by heavy wind gusts and relatively low humidity, creating conditions that could support the ignition and spread of wildfires or brushfires.

“When humidity drops and the winds pick up, the environment becomes prime for fires to ignite and rapidly spread, even from the smallest spark,” Mr. Jaschen said.

Although the weekend “red flag warning” has expired, Mr. Jaschen said Virgin Islands Fire and Emergency Medical Services Director Antonio Stevens decided to issue a territory-wide burn ban.

The ban applies to all open fires, including “campfires, bonfires, trash, yard debris, and brush burning.” Mr. Jaschen said it will remain in effect until further notice.

He also reminded residents of Water Island that a permanent burn ban remains in effect there.

VIFEMS officials will continue monitoring weather conditions across the territory and will inform the public when the ban can be lifted.

In the meantime, Mr. Jaschen asked residents to call 911 immediately if they smell smoke or see flames, and to request a fire response.