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More British Virgin Islands Businesses Given Green Light to Reopen, Including Public Services as No New Covid-19 Cases Reported

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Roadtown, Tortola By. ANGELA BURNS/VI CONSORTIUM

TORTOLA, BVI — The British Virgin Islands continues to report significant progress in the fight against the novel coronavirus that causes the Covid-19 disease, with 114 of the 120 samples tested to date returning negative.

Of the six positive cases, three have fully recovered and there has been one death.

The results of the latest batch of 27 suspected cases verified by the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) were announced Wednesday night by Health and Social Development

Minister Carvin Malone. He said nine additional results were pending.

Meantime, more businesses have been approved to reopen and public servants will return to work on May 4th, as the territory eases out of a full 24-hour lockdown that lasted almost a month, flattening the BVI economy.

Following a review of the Curfew Act No. 14, Cabinet expanded the list of businesses as follows: supermarkets; bakeries; fishers and farmers; pharmacies; banks; fuel stations; ferries for internal transportation only; buses and taxis with limited passengers; construction companies; building and concrete supply businesses; laundromats; home delivery services; insurance and financial services that cannot be carried out remotely; office supplies and equipment and electronic stores; automotive parts and repairs; manufacturers of hand sanitizers and PPEs; water and ice production and deliveries; emergency household and business repairs as approved; medical establishments; legal establishments; telecommunication companies; hardware stores; commercial and household supplies and appliances; restaurants for delivery and take out only; beauty product supplies stores; courier stores and freight agents; veterinarian practices; printing, graphics and signage suppliers; flower shops; real estate agents; department clothing stores; marine stores and boat yard operations; churches and places of worship; funeral homes and sanitation, insect, mold and bug control companies.

Under the leadership of the Chief Environmental Health Officer, employees of the public service were deployed as compliance teams and social distancing task forces to assist in inspecting and certifying hundreds of private businesses and establishments for reopening.

“All these businesses stepped up to the plate and I am pleased to say they have placed the necessary resources in place to operate safely and I once again appeal to the wider community to take personal responsibility for complying with these measures,” the Health Minister stated.

He said the more everyone adapts to the realities of the new COVID-19 environment, the better the chances of restoring the social and economic fabric of the society.

Earlier on Wednesday, Deputy Governor David Archer Jr. announced that client facing departments such as traffic, labour, immigration, trade, inland revenue and other administrative departments, will reopen on May 4th from 8am to 12:30pm.

He said not everyone will be physically in office as some will be working remotely.

The deputy governor commended those public servants who rose to the challenge of assisting in the government’s efforts to manage call centers, feeding programs, inspection and quarantine centers, but he issued a veiled warning to persons who are not motivated, saying: “we would have to get them dancing to a different drum.”

On January 30, the World Health Organization declared the outbreak of COVID-19 a global public health emergency and a pandemic on March 11.

The deadly virus has negatively impacted the health, social and economic life of every region of the world.