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Bryan to Activate 'Open Doors' Stage of USVI's Move Back to Normalcy on June 1; Wearing of Masks, Except at Bars and Restaurants Will Remain in Effect

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Governor Albert Bryan announced Thursday that his administration will move the territory to the Open Doors phase of the USVI's drive back to normalcy, inching ever closer to what the administration is calling the new normal.

This new phase, however, does not change much aside from what has already been announced. June 1 will see the territory's doors reopening to leisure travelers, who will occupy the islands' hotels and other lodging outfits. And bars and restaurants — already open — will continue operating. Patrons of the aforementioned operations will not need to wear face masks, Mr. Bryan reminded, though employees are still required to.

All other businesses will still need to require their employees and customers to wear masks, the governor stressed. And all social distancing rules remain in place, including the six-feet-apart guideline.

To prepare for leisure guests, the governor said heat sensors for fever temperature measurement were being installed at the airports. The idea is to detect passengers who may be sick with Covid-19 and isolating those individuals to minimize spread of the deadly pathogen.

The following restrictions remain in place in the USVI:

- Employees are required to wear facial coverings at all times. Governor Bryan told the Consortium last week that while patrons are not required to wear the masks at the restaurants and bars, "it is strongly recommended."
- Establishments must provide "sanitization stations" for customers and employees.
- Restaurants and bars can only operate at half of Fire Marshal-approved seating capacity, or host a maximum of 50 customers. "That is 50 percent of what the Fire Marshal said you can put in there or 50 customers — whichever one is less," Mr. Bryan said.
- Tables must be placed at least six feet apart.
- Establishments cannot cater to parties larger than six people. Larger groups can be split up among multiple tables that are properly spaced apart.
- Bar stools must be "spaced out as much as possible. ... We know that's going to be difficult, but we are encouraging you to do that."

Relative to coronavirus cases, Mr. Bryan said the territory has been performing very well. He said 1,708 individuals were tested for Covid-19 as of Thursday, with 1,617 returning negative, 69 positive, 22 pending cases and six deaths. There were no patients at the Juan F. Luis Hospital on Thursday, and the cargo ship passenger who was [accepted into the territory earlier this month](#) remains on a ventilator at the Schneider Regional Medical Center.

On the territory's infection rate, Mr. Bryan said, "We have conducted more than 500 consecutive tests of persons under investigation without encountering a positive." With the low rate, the governor said his team thinks the administration has been successful in eliminating community spread.

Armed with the positive news, Mr. Bryan said if the trend holds, he would move the current capacity of gatherings from 50 to 250 by July or August. Even so, the governor said he was prepared to dial back the speed of reopening if testing results demand such action.

The governor further stated that while bars and restaurants currently have no limitation on times of operation, "if we see things are getting out of control or people are not handling themselves then we may move to a 1:00 a.m. closure for all those types of establishments."

According to the Johns Hopkins University, as of Thursday afternoon, the novel coronavirus had infected 5,931,112 people, and killed 363,573. In the U.S., 15.2 million people have been tested as of Thursday, the university's data reveals.

