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Bryan Says Covid-19 Travel Restrictions Will Take Effect Next Monday; Temporary Hold on Off-Island Contractors Headed to Limetree Bay Announced

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Given the influx of incoming travelers since the reopening of the territory and flight increases at both airports from major airlines like Spirit, Delta, and American Airlines, Governor Albert Bryan updated the territory on Monday, stating that the new travel restrictions announced in part last week will take effect next Monday. The governor also announced a temporary ban on new incoming contractors for Limetree Bay. Last week, a total of 21 coronavirus cases were reported at the oil refinery and storage terminal, located on the south shore of St. Croix.

The territory has seen cases of the virus surge, moving from three cases to 29 in one month. The latest numbers, as reported by the Dept. of Health, include a total of 3,173 tests performed, with 3,060 returning negative and 112 positive as of Monday.

New Travel Restrictions

As of Monday, July 13, incoming travelers whose state of origin was Arizona, Texas or Florida are required to have a negative Covid-19 test within 72 hours of travel or a positive antibody test, meaning that they had the virus and have antibodies that will stay in their system for 6 months.

“If you cannot produce this negative test result, of course, we cannot turn you around at the airport, but you will be subject to a 14-day quarantine,” the governor said.

Mr. Bryan said his administration will continue to reassess the travel policy every two weeks to determine if any updates need to be made to the hot spot list.

Mr. Bryan has consistently said most of the confirmed cases of Covid-19 from travelers have been Virgin Islanders returning home. “We as locals need to be vigilant about our family and friends returning home and insist that they get tested before they come,” he said. When they arrive, the governor suggested, they should limit their interactions with the community by quarantining themselves for at least 14 days, regardless of their place of origin.

The territory's leader confirmed that fever cameras are monitoring in most locations of the airports, except the foreign arrival gate, an issue that was being negotiated with the U.S. Customs and Border Protection. Additionally, representatives from the National Guard and health personnel are conducting random temperature scans with individuals, Mr. Bryan said.

Limetree Bay Updated Measures

After an emergency meeting with Limetree management this past weekend, Mr. Bryan said, “We have implemented increased measures in and around the refinery in order to keep the employees and our community safe.” The Consortium [on Saturday reported](#) that Limetree Bay employees residing at the Man Camp have been ordered not to leave the facility by Governor Bryan, following the Covid-19 outbreak at the refinery and storage terminal.

Additionally, a temporary hold has been placed on new incoming contractors to Limetree Bay.

Local Restrictions Unchanged

There were no notable changes in local protocols. Beaches are reopened for regular visits, and bars are required to close at 12 midnight with last call at 11 pm.

The governor insisted that all was still safer at home. However, he does not believe that the territory is at a stage where restrictions need to be walked back to the "Safer at Home" phase of reopening.

The protocols that were put in place, according to the governor, assisted in identifying positive cases during the recent spike in numbers. As of Monday, there were 27 active cases being tracked, 56 tests pending with 16 individuals that were scheduled to be tested today, and 1 hospitalization at Juan Luis on STX. There were no hospitalizations on St. Thomas.