

The Virgin Islands Consortium

VITEMA To Test Siren Warning System And Broadcast Emergency Alert System At 8 A.M. Monday For Vigilant Guard Exercise

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The Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA) is making final preparations for the national level, full-scale exercise called Vigilant Guard, to be conducted next week in the USVI, VITEMA announced Friday.

To signal the start of the exercise, at 8:00 a.m. on Monday, VITEMA will activate the siren warning system territory-wide and broadcast a tone alert and pre-recorded 'test' message, according to the release. The siren warning system includes an additional seven sirens recently installed on St. Croix at the following sites; La Grande Princesse

near the Old Elena Christian Junior High School, Southgate, Cotton Valley, Estate Whim near the Reinholdt Jackson Complex, Cane Bay and at the Arthur Richards Junior High School, according to VITEMA.

The government agency will simultaneously issue a broadcast emergency alert system test with participating radio and television stations.

“We’re asking the community not to be alarmed,” said VITEMA Director Mona Barnes. “This is only a test of our alert systems.”

As part of the Vigilant Guard exercise, VITEMA will also establish two Point of Distribution sites, referred to as a POD. In a real disaster, a POD would allow for efficient distribution of essential commodities such as dried food and water to the public.

VITEMA is inviting the community to drive through its PODs between 10 a.m. and noon:

- On Tuesday, at the Reinholdt Jackson Complex at Estate Whim, St. Croix.
- On Wednesday, at the north section of the Four Winds Plaza on St. Thomas.

Those who drive through the POD will receive an eco-bag filled with disaster preparedness information, water and snacks.

As part of the exercise scenario, a 7.5 magnitude earthquake will occur in the Anegada Trench, which will generate a tsunami that severely impacts the island of St. Thomas and causes moderate damage on St. Croix.

More than 1,200 personnel, including active military, national guardsmen, local first responders, local and federal emergency managers, and non-government organizations are expected to participate in Vigilant Guard 2017 - USVI.

Training events will occur at several other venues across the territory including:

- WICO Dock, St. Thomas.
- Lionel Roberts Stadium, St. Thomas.
- US National Park Service docks at Red Hook, St. Thomas.
- Schneider Regional Medical Center, St. Thomas.
- Magen’s Bay, St. Thomas.
- American Legion Hall, St. Thomas.
- Reichhold Center for the Arts, St. Thomas.
- Gallows Bay dock area, St. Croix.
- VITEMA offices, St. Thomas and St. Croix
- VI National Guard, St. Thomas and St. Croix.

Emergency response capabilities to be evaluated include operational communications, triage and pre-hospital treatment, mass search and rescue, sheltering operations, hazardous material response, civil disturbance, commodities distribution, public information and warning, and integration of military support to civil authorizes.