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In March, Territory Had 3 Positive Cases and USVI Was Shut Down. Today, 104 Active Cases and Territory is Wide Open.

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Windward Passage Hotel in Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas. Even as Covid-19 cases have surged, lodging operations are allowed to continue accepting tourists.

Back on March 19th, when the USVI was tracking only 3 positive coronavirus cases, the Bryan administration [limited gatherings to no more than 10](#). As of Thursday, the USVI had 104 active cases of the deadly disease and the gathering limit is now 50. During that time, non-essential businesses were ordered closed as well, with the government even [providing a list of operations](#) that were considered essential.

But with cases now increasing territory-wide, and St. Croix [experiencing an outbreak](#) since last week with 138 of the territory's 206 confirmed cases, Governor Albert Bryan has left the 50-person capacity unchanged, and lodging facilities are allowed to continue accepting reservations, though new protocols announced by the governor recently and set to take effect on Wednesday, will place more stringent requirements on visitors, including a mandatory negative coronavirus test result conducted within the last five days. Mr. Bryan had announced on March 22 — when the territory's positive Covid-19 caseload were in the single digits — that occupancy businesses [were to stop accepting guests](#).

Yet even with the new rules taking effect this week, there will be loopholes, and the key to success will hinge on enforcement. The governor has said that if travelers come into the territory without a negative coronavirus test result, they will be given the option to be tested locally. If they refuse, they will be required to quarantine for a mandatory 14 days. However, Mr. Bryan has expressed in the past that enforcing quarantine would be difficult. In April, he told the Consortium that arresting people for failing to adhere to quarantine orders was a civil rights issue, and he challenged the publication to find a state that had taken such measures ([we did](#)).

"We're no different than any other state in terms of our penalties for violating the stay-at-home order or violating a 14-day quarantine," he said in April. "The problem comes in tracking. I would like you to put forth evidence that anyone of those places who've actually arrested anybody for violating a 14-day quarantine. It's a civil rights issue. I mean how do you arrest somebody that you think may be sick? They, just like us are asking people to comply with the 14-day quarantine."

[In recent times](#), mainland states have been requiring visitors to quarantine or face well-defined penalties. In late June, a joint mandatory 14-day quarantine advisory from at least three states at the time — New York, New Jersey and Connecticut — applied to travelers coming from Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, Utah and Texas — all states where coronavirus cases have surged recently.

According to CNN, the states' health commissioners were set to pursue an aggressive public relations campaign at airports, highways and other locations to bring awareness to the new protocols.

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo said those violating his state's quarantine would be fined \$2,000 for the first violation, \$5,000 for the second violation, and \$10,000 if harm is caused.

In Hawaii, law enforcement have been arresting — [and kicking out](#) — mandatory quarantine flouters.

The governor [shutdown bars on Thursday](#), but allowed restaurants to not only remain open, but to serve alcoholic beverages to seated guests. There have been reports of bars using the governor's description as a loophole to remain open, so long as they provide some food.

For Mr. Bryan, however, it's a balancing act. The governor has reminded the public of his responsibility not only to protect the public from the deadly disease, but also to ascertain that the USVI has a functioning economy.

By the numbers

Twenty-four of the 25 new coronavirus cases reported in the territory Sunday night were recorded on St. Croix, as [an outbreak that started last week](#) on the island continues to expand its reach.

According to the Dept. of Health's latest [infographic](#), two of the cases on St. Croix were transmitted through close contact, while 22 were still under investigation as of Sunday night.

The single case on St. Thomas was transmitted through close contact.

Total confirmed cases on St. Croix was 138 as of Sunday, while total cases on St. Thomas and St. John stood at 62 and 6 respectively. D.O.H. said it was tracking 104 active cases.

To date, 4,296 tests were performed, of which 4,084 returned negative and a total of 206 positive. Six people have died as a result of the virus.

The governor usually hosts coronavirus press briefings on Mondays at 1p.m.