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Prison in St. Thomas on Lockdown After 20 People Test Positive for Covid-19

Coronavirus / **Published On August 12, 2020 04:21 AM /**

Staff Consortium **August 12, 2020**

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Last updated at 7:16 a.m.

ST. THOMAS — The V.I. Bureau of Corrections (B.O.C.) has placed the St. Thomas prison facility, named the Alexander A. Farrelly Criminal Complex, on lockdown after 20 people — including inmates and staff members — tested positive for the coronavirus.

According to a release from the bureau, the first time B.O.C. officials learned of the virus at the complex in St. Thomas was Sunday night, after a detainee tested positive. The bureau said it then asked the Dept. of Health to test everyone at the facility, and learned Tuesday that 19 other people had tested positive for the virus.

The high number of infections at the prison prompted B.O.C. to place the St. Thomas facility on lockdown. The bureau also said all remaining staff members would be tested. Furthermore, the bureau said it would not accept new inmates into the prison, according to the release, a move that falls in line with the Dept. of Health's public health quarantine of the site following the outbreak.

According to the bureau, there have been no confirmed cases at the prison on St. Croix and therefore mandatory testing was not required.

It was unclear as to how the virus infiltrated the facility. The practice in prisons across the U.S. is to ascertain that tests are performed on all prisoners before they are allowed into a prison facility, so as to not infect other inmates. In some states, [inmates have sued corrections bureaus](#) alleging that enough was not done to protect them from contracting the deadly disease.

On Tuesday, D.O.H. [reported 63 cases](#) of the coronavirus territory-wide, with St. Thomas accounting for 57 of those cases.

The Dept. of Health listed almost all of the St. Thomas cases — 51 — in the under investigation category, meaning D.O.H. as of Tuesday night was still attempting to determine how the new cases were transmitted. The six St. Thomas cases that D.O.H. did determine included 5 community spread infections and 1 close contact.

On St. Croix, 5 new cases were reported, 4 of which were close contact and 1 community spread. St. John had 1 new case, which was under investigation as of Tuesday night.

The Dept. of Health is tracking 162 active cases: 139 in St. Thomas and 19 on St. Croix. St. John had 4 active cases as of Tuesday night.

In total, 639 people have tested positive for Covid-19 in the U.S. Virgin Islands, and 9 people have died. According to D.O.H., 11,444 people have been tested for the virus, with 10,778 tests returning negative.