

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Person Cleared by Dept. of Health to Leave Quarantine After Testing Positive For Covid-19 Tests Positive a Second Time (Update)

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Ernice Gilbert **August 21, 2020**



GOVERNMENT OF
THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES
— ◆ —
VIRGIN ISLANDS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

ST. CROIX OFFICE
CHARLES HARWOOD MEMORIAL COMPLEX
3500 ESTATE RICHMOND
CHRISTIANSTED, ST. CROIX, U.S.V.I. 00820-
4370 TEL: (340)718-6551 * FAX: (340)718-1376

ST. THOMAS OFFICE
1303 HOSPITAL GROUND, SUITE 10
CHARLOTTE AMALIE
ST. THOMAS, U.S.V.I. 00802-6722
TEL: (340)774-0117 * FAX: (340)777-4001

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Based on resolution of symptoms, as self-reported to the Virgin Islands Department of Health, [REDACTED] may discontinue home isolation and resume normal activities effective **August 15, 2020.**

Per Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance:

"Persons with COVID-19 who have symptoms and were directed to care for themselves at home may discontinue home isolation under the following conditions:

At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed *since recovery* defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and** improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath);

Letter notifying a Covid-9 patient to resume normal activities. This patient retested positive for the virus after her employer required her to take another test before returning to work.

Last updated on Sat. Aug. 22 at 7:49 a.m.

Update: See our story on whether a person who had Covid-19 and was deemed recovered can transmit the disease [here](#).

A person who tested positive for the novel coronavirus virus, who was placed under quarantine for two weeks after which this person was cleared by the V.I. Department of Health to leave quarantine and head back into the community, tested positive a second time after being told by her employer that she would have to take a second test before being allowed back to work.

The second Covid-19 test was administered via throat swab, which is a diagnostic test to determine whether someone has the virus. Antibody tests, performed to determine whether someone who was ill had developed antibodies, are performed through blood samples.

The Consortium was provided with the letter the woman received from the Dept. of Health, signed by Territorial Epidemiologist Dr. Esther Ellis, clearing her to head back into the public. D.O.H. does not require persons who contract the disease to be tested a second time before being cleared as recovered. Instead, D.O.H. relies on those persons to self-report their condition after a period of quarantine.

"Based on the resolution of symptoms as self-reported to the Virgin Islands Department of Health, [name redacted] may discontinue home isolation and resume normal activities effective August 15th," reads the letter from D.O.H. and signed by Dr. Ellis, seen [here](#).

The Consortium [raised the issue](#) to Governor Albert Bryan during Mr. Bryan's Monday press briefing, urging the administration to reconsider how it qualifies individuals who contract the disease to be cleared back to normal life. The publication contended that releasing persons back into the community who self-report that their symptoms were no more without perhaps performing a second test, was a dangerous strategy that could render all the administration's efforts to blunt the deadly disease worthless.

People who have fully recovered from Covid-19 build antibodies and are believed to be immune from the disease for a period of time that has yet to be determined. If persons who have the disease are cleared to resume normal activities prematurely, those persons — emboldened by the notion that they have not only recovered, but have built immunity to the virus — may act even less careful than they had in the past and thereby place more individuals at risk.

D.O.H. listed as recovered 39 individuals between Tuesday and Wednesday, and 26 between Wednesday and Thursday, for a total of 65 recoveries in the last two days. In total, the department listed 649 individuals as recovered as of Thursday, and 273 cases as active.

Responding to this publication's question Monday, Mr. Bryan said the quarantine time had moved from 14 to 10 days based on new findings. "That's a new change that wasn't there before," he said. "They're finding out now that the majority of symptoms come on within 3-5 days of you being in contact with a person so we adjusted our testing regimen for that as well." Mr. Bryan did state that the administration would consider the publication's suggestion.

On the U.S. mainland, many companies are seeking tests for employees before they are allowed to return to work. The Wall Street Journal, citing corporate medical advisers and human resources executives, said regular tests for workers could keep exposure to sick

employees to a minimum and boost employees' confidence about coming back to work.

Mr. Bryan said there was nothing preventing private firms in the territory from requiring their employees to be retested before returning to the workforce. However, the recommendation has not been made by the Department of Health and government employees who have tested positive are not required to be retested before returning to their jobs.

The territory was [forced into lockdown on Monday](#) through an order by Governor Bryan, following a surge in cases that was affecting at the time mostly St. Thomas. The island has remained the center of the outbreak, but St. Croix cases have been steadily increasing as well, with D.O.H. tracking 57 active cases on the island as of Thursday.

The new lockdown, called the "Stay at Open" phase of reopening, has placed more pressure on local businesses deemed non-essential, and may force even more operations to go out of business depending on how long the shutdown lasts. Mr. Bryan has said easing of restrictions will be based on whether the government can contain the surge.