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With Covid-19 Cases Surging to 47 in the BVI, 38 of Which are Active, Government Extends Lockdown, Curfew by Two Weeks

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Tortola BVI By. VI CONSORTIUM

TORTOLA, BVI — On Tuesday BVI Governor Augustus Jaspert held a press conference to update the British territory on the government's response to the surge of Covid-19 cases and what will be the next stage of their pandemic response plan.

As of Monday, 47 people have tested positive for the novel Coronavirus, with 15 results still pending. Of those 47 positive cases, there are 38 cases still active, and one death recorded.

The BVI has been experiencing small clusters of cases that are disbursed but interlinked. “The time has come for us to adapt again to fight this virus and protect our islands,” Mr. Jaspert said during his briefing. The governor said he understood that this period — from Covid-19 to restrictions implemented to combat the virus — has been tough on everyone. “Still, the way we manage the next stage will be crucial,” he said.

What you need to know:

Starting September 2, the BVI will revert to the “Manage It” Orange Alert phase of their Covid-19 response plan. The primary purpose of this phase is to minimize transmission throughout the territory. While the government has moved to the “Manage It” phase of its plan; Mr. Jaspert has asked the BVI people to support him in making this decision. The government has decided it will not introduce a full 24-hour lockdown. “This is an option, however, it comes with significant cost economically, socially, and mentally,” said Governor Jaspert. “The only way to avoid a full lockdown is for every person to comply.”

- A new curfew order will be implemented starting September 2 and lasting for two weeks. Lockdown will start from 1:01 p.m each day until 5 a.m each morning. This curfew means everyone must stay within the limits of their homes between these hours.
- Governor Jaspert urges people to stay home as much as possible, do not gather in groups, visit other households or partake in non-essential activities. People should only leave their homes during the limited hours for essential trips, such as purchasing groceries, medicine, and getting exercise.
- All beaches will be closed at 12 p.m to ensure patrons are back at home by 1 p.m. Beaches should only be used for exercise and not for parties or meetings in groups.
- A limited number of essential businesses will be open from 5 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Businesses must comply with the Covid-19 regulations set in place, such as: providing hand sanitizing stations, thorough and regular cleanings of establishments, and ensuring everyone wears a mask and maintain a distance of six feet from one another. Those who fail to abide by the rules can put their business at risk for closer.
- The restrictions on movement on the territorial waters remain in place. No activity is allowed, excluding those who have been authorized to do so. BVI Premier and Minister of Finance Andrew A. Fahie, highlighted that anyone engaging in any illegal activities will be sought out and brought to justice. Mr. Fahie also said, "The BVI will not be used as a hub for human smuggling, to the USVI and also from the USVI to the BVI en route to their home country."
- All schools will remain closed, and all school-related activities will be discontinued and reevaluated every two weeks. Teachers will still be allowed access to their classrooms to prepare learning materials and online resources.
- To ensure full compliance of the new response plan, the Police and Social Monitoring Task Force will be visiting establishments and patrolling public places.

- If anyone is found breaking curfew, not wearing a mask, or practicing proper social distancing, they will be issued a fine on the spot of \$100 for individuals and \$1,000 for businesses. The government has emphasized there will be no more warnings for first-time offenses. The governor said, “Businesses and individuals who fail to follow these measures put in place are selfish and puts everyone at risk.” Individuals can call the Task Force at 311 to report any concerns and non-compliance
- Covid-19 testing is available in the territory. Additional testing facilities and services are being commissioned and will be announced at a later time. Covid-19 testing is free; unless you require a test result for travel purposes, then the test will be \$135.00.

Establishments exempted under new curfew order:

1. Officers of private security service providers as defined in section 2 of the Private Security Industry Act, 2007, who are on duty, when traveling on, to or from duty;
2. Customs and Immigration officers who are on duty, when traveling to or from duty;
3. Persons employed at insurance companies for the purpose of issuing and renewing policies and persons with appointments who need to complete documentation in person;
4. Persons employed in the public and private sector waste management services, who are on duty, when traveling to or from duty;
5. Persons employed in approved fuel distribution and delivery services, who are on duty, when traveling to or from duty;
6. Persons employed as public and private sector social care providers, who are on duty, when traveling to or from duty;
7. Judges and Magistrates and other persons employed in the Courts, who are on duty, when traveling to or from duty;
8. Persons employed in mortuary services, who are on duty, when traveling to or from duty;
9. Persons employed for humanitarian support purposes, who are on duty, when traveling to or from duty;
10. Persons employed as emergency call handlers, who are on duty, when traveling to or from duty;
11. Persons employed as freight, courier and cargo distribution, who are on duty, when traveling to or from duty;
12. Persons engaged to provide apostille and related statutory services, who are on duty, when traveling to or from duty;
13. Persons employed as media and broadcast providers, who are on duty, when traveling to or from duty;
14. Persons engaged in bona fide farming agriculture or fisheries with urgent need to care for animals and persons offering veterinary services who are on duty, when traveling to or from duty;
15. Persons employed in transportation services (providing transportation for essential and critical operations), who are on duty, when driving to or from duty;
16. Persons employed in supermarkets providing services to and for essential and critical operations, who are on duty, when traveling to or from duty;
17. Persons employed at the health and emergency operations center who are on duty, when traveling to or from duty;
18. Persons employed in the legal and financial services sector approved by the Governor to undertake specific and urgent legal and financial services transactions that cannot be carried

- out remotely or by electronic means, who are on duty, when traveling to or from duty;
19. Persons who are traveling en route to a port or airport as approved by Cabinet under the Immigration and Passport (Authorised Ports of Entry) (Amendment) Regulations, 2020, (without a detour) for the purpose of leaving the Territory;
 20. Persons employed for emergency household and business repairs, who are on duty, when traveling to or from duty;
 21. Persons employed with cleaning, sanitisation, insect, mold and bug control companies, who are on duty, when traveling to or from duty;
 22. Persons employed by remittance services;
 23. Teachers in public and private schools who attend their institutions for the sole purpose of accessing resources for on-line instruction; and
 24. Persons employed by automotive companies and garages;
 25. Persons employed in the travel sector, approved by the Minister of Immigration, to undertake specific and urgent travel transactions that cannot be carried out remotely or by electronic means, who are on duty, when traveling to or from duty.

The Minister of Health and Social Development, Carvin Malone stressed that the public must stay vigilant in their health and safety practices. "We are not out of the woods, as cases continue to rise and spread globally, regionally, and locally," said Mr. Malone. "Stay at home, follow the curfew, wear a mask, and protect one another."