

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## DLCA, Fire Service And Dept. Of Health To Perform Tests Of Food Vendors In Close Proximity To Gas Stations

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The Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs (D.L.C.A.) on Tuesday led a task force dubbed “Operation Safety”, consisting of The Department of Health (D.O.H.) and The Virgin Islands Fire Service (V.I.F.S.) to visit every fueling station on St. Croix to gather information.

According to D.L.C.A., the team’s mission is to determine whether or not a food vendor exists on a fueling station’s premises or within close proximity. If a mobile vendor exists and flames are used to prepare its food, the agencies would take measurements from the

mobile vendor's property to check each source of potential vapor. When the fact-finding is concluded, the task force shall regroup to determine which mobile vendor has to cease and desist its operation in the interest of public safety.

The regulatory agency said as consumers, residents regularly visit fuel stations to fill up their vehicles or for other reasons, unaware of the dangers of gasoline.

Gasoline is dangerous because it is highly volatile, the department said. The fumes are capable of ignition up to 12 feet away from a pooled source. It can float on water and may spread long distances, making ignition and flash-back possible. Gasoline may ignite from a nearby spark, flame, or even static electricity and become a "fireball" with a temperature of 15,000 degrees Fahrenheit. In addition to fumes, gasoline also produces ignitable vapors that are 3 to 4 times heavier than air and can travel for great distances along the ground.

Operation Safety is a pro-active measure to ensure that the public is protected from a potential disaster," said DLCA Commissioner Designee Richard Evangelista. "During the operation, each participating department shall also conduct a routine inspection of each fuel service station. I thank our sister agencies, DOH and VIFS for making the time and assisting DLCA with this initiative by educating before regulating."

Operation safety will continue in the St. Thomas-St. John District in the near future, D.L.C.A. said.