

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Passenger Dies After Going Overboard At Sea On Cruise Ship Headed To VI; Local Authorities Respond

VIC News / **Published On August 15, 2019 09:03 AM /**

Robert Moore **August 15, 2019**



ST. THOMAS -- As cruise ship passengers streamed off the Symphony of the Seas toward gift shops, waiting safaris seem to barely notice the police wagon and Medical Examiner's Office truck parked at the end of the gangway at the Crown Bay terminal.

Virgin Islands authorities responded early Wednesday to a call from Royal Caribbean Cruise Ltd, notifying them that the St. Thomas-bound Symphony was carrying the body of a passenger who plunged to death after going overboard as the boat left St. Kitts.

Royal Caribbean said the passenger was an Australian man who went overboard in the early morning hours Wednesday. "Our ship immediately turned, launched a rescue boat,

and conducted a full-scale search," said Owen Torres, communications manager for Royal Caribbean Cruise Ltd. The man was retrieved from the water. What caused him to go overboard was unknown.



Medical Examiner's Office vehicle at Crown Bay as local authorities investigate man overboard incident. (Credit: Robert Moore, VI Consortium)

Although the Virgin Islands Medical Examiner's Office and detectives responded at about 7:00 a.m., the man's body remained with family members. "The DOJ (Department of Justice) complied with the wishes of the family members of the deceased along with the concurrence of the vessel's Captain to have the body remain on the ship until it reaches its final destination port in Miami, Florida," said Virgin Islands Attorney General Denise George. "We extend our deepest condolences to the family of the deceased."

Local authorities are not investigating because the incident did not occur in the territory. "Since the incident occurred in international waters, the remains were not taken nor was an autopsy performed by the DOJ office of the Medical Examiner (ME). Virgin

Islands law does not place such a legal duty on the Medical Examiner unless the death occurred within the Virgin Islands, Ms. George said.

The Symphony of the Sea is one of the largest cruise ships at sea. It is on a week-long Eastern Caribbean sail out of Miami, Fla. The Symphony left St. Thomas Wednesday afternoon and is scheduled to return to its homeport on Saturday.

© Viconsortium 2026