

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Karen Expected To Affect USVI By Noon, Governor Says; No Curfew In Place, But 'Stay Off the Roads'

VIC News / **Published On September 24, 2019 02:16 PM /**

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Governor Albert Bryan held a press briefing via teleconference at 9:30 a.m. today to update the territory on the status of Tropical Storm Karen, which was downgraded to a depression on Monday afternoon but regained strength overnight. The storm is expected to strengthen over the next 48 hours, at which point it should be moving away from the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

According to the National Hurricane Center's 8:00 a.m. update, the center of Karen was located by an Air Force Reserve Hurricane Hunter aircraft near latitude 17.2 North, longitude 65.8 West. Karen is moving toward the north near 7 mph (11 km/h), and this general motion is expected to continue today. A north-northeastward motion is forecast

tonight through Wednesday night.

On the forecast track, the center of Karen will pass near or over Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands today, and then move over the western Atlantic tonight and Wednesday.

Governor Bryan said the storm is expected to start affecting the USVI by noon today, so the winds and rains experienced earlier this morning should not be mistaken for T.S. Karen. "Once the rainfall starts around noon, it will continue well into the night," Mr. Bryan said. He said the storm's slow movement means it could linger and drop a lot of rain on the USVI.

"Right now we're expecting the eye to move over PR -- good news for us, bad news for them," said the governor. "We will be experiencing tropical storm winds... and higher gusts."

The governor did not announce a curfew, but he urged residents to stay off the roads as much as possible. "We're not going to impose a curfew; [we] still have about 3,000 tourists in the territory," he said.

Mr. Bryan, classifying Karen as a "weak" tropical storm, said he expected to announce the opening of government early Wednesday morning. "But there's not a real good look at this point, because we don't know how much more the storm may slow down, or how much rainfall we will get," he said.

Both airports are open. Seaborne and Seaflight have canceled all flights, while Cape Air was still operating as of 9:30 a.m. today, the governor said.

Rainfall

Karen is expected to produce the following rainfall accumulations through Wednesday:

- Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands: 2 to 4 inches, isolated 8 inches.
- Leeward Islands: 1 to 3 inches, isolated 5 inches.

These rains may cause flash flooding and mudslides, especially in mountainous areas.

Wind

Tropical-storm-force winds, especially in gusts, are expected in the warning area by late morning. Winds could be higher on the windward sides of hills and mountains, and also in elevated terrain.