

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Covid-19 Cases Climb to 66 in USVI; 8 New Cases Associated With Two Private Vessels in St. Thomas

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Ernice Gilbert **November 20, 2020**



The V.I. Department of Health as of Thursday was tracking 66 active coronavirus cases, with 13 new infections being reported Thursday night, of which 8 were from two private vessels in St. Thomas, according to a D.O.H. release issued Thursday.

With Covid-19 cases surging to all-time highs on the U.S. mainland — leading the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to [urge Americans not to travel for Thanksgiving](#) — the USVI, with its ease of access to mainland Americans, was bound to be challenged. The territory throughout October had seen a substantial decrease in cases from previous levels.

More than 250,000 Americans have died from Covid-19. On Wednesday, the U.S. reported 170,161 new coronavirus infections, according Johns Hopkins University. It was the second highest daily toll of the pandemic. Compounding the surge, hospitalizations and ICU admissions continue to set new records, straining health-care systems in a number of states.

The V.I. D.O.H. said all persons who tested positive for the disease on the vessels were part of the crew. "The vessels are a cargo ship and a private yacht. The department's epidemiology division is currently monitoring and testing all other crewmembers on board both vessels," D.O.H. said.

The department further stated that the positive cases from both vessels and their close contacts were safely under quarantine and isolated from others. Both vessels are inaccessible to the public and no one is allowed off of the ship, D.O.H. said.

"Staying home is still the best way to protect yourself and others. Wear a mask to keep your nose and mouth covered when in public settings," D.O.H. said "Avoid close contact by staying at least six feet apart from anyone you do not live with. Wash your hands often with soap and warm water. Avoid contact with anyone who is sick, and avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth."

According to the department, 32 of the 66 active cases are on St. Croix, 29 in St. Thomas and 5 on St. John. Eighty-three test results were pending as of Thursday evening. The virus has killed 23 people territory-wide: 15 in St. Thomas, 7 on St. Croix and 1 on St. John.