

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Police Commissioner Apologizes for Nonpayment of Overtime Owed to Law Enforcement Serving Under VIPD During Pandemic

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Police Commissioner Trevor Velinor on Friday evening apologized to law enforcement officers from various gov't departments and agencies who have not been paid for overtime work performed about a month ago.

Law enforcement who are employed with various departments and agencies have been placed under the authority of the V.I.P.D. during the pandemic as part of a Covid-19 Law Enforcement Tasks Force. The V.I.P.D. delegates work to these officers, including work not related to Covid-19, according to law enforcement sources. These officers are

oftentimes utilized on late-night jobs, and the overtime hours for a two-week period run between 30hrs to 40hrs.

Overtime payment the VIPD issued for the week of Nov. 7 was calculated wrong, with Mr. Velinor telling the Consortium that the calculation was double the amount owed. The V.I.P.D. canceled the payment and issued another, but the second issuance was wrong as well, according to affected law enforcement officers. The V.I.P.D. canceled the overtime payment again.

Fast forward a month to Thursday, which was the government's latest pay period, and the officers still had not received overtime payment for the work performed a month ago. The nonpayment has affected law enforcement officers from both districts.

"We're putting our lives in danger," said one law enforcement officer affected by the nonpayment, speaking to the risks involved for first responders during a pandemic.

These law enforcement officers get paid their 80-hour two-week salary from the departments and agencies where they are primarily employed, and the V.I.P.D. is responsible for the overtime payments.

On Friday evening, Mr. Velinor confirmed the issue, explained it and apologized to the affected officers. He also vowed to work toward rectifying the matter.

"They are right. The V.I.P.D. is responsible to pay the overtime and it goes to the Dept. of Finance. What happened was somehow Finance doubled the payment and the officers brought it to their attention. We're now waiting on Finance to cut the new checks for that overtime portion," Mr. Velinor said. The commissioner said the officers have received pay for all other work performed, including overtime work performed after the Nov. 7 mishap.

"We're just waiting for Finance to literally just make the correction," he said. "I will apologize to the folks; they will get paid. We just have to wait for the person in Finance to get into the system and do what they have to do."