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USVI Renters Face Eviction in January as CDC Moratorium Ends

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A wave of Virgin Islanders who currently owe their landlords months of rent payments as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic will face eviction in January, the month when a sweeping order by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that halted through December 31 millions of residential renters from being evicted, comes to an end.

When the CDC [announced its decision](#) at the beginning of September, it said the move was aimed at combating the novel coronavirus. The expansive action covers all of the U.S.'s 43 million renters who fall in the purview of the order.

The halt on evictions covers states and territories, including the U.S. Virgin Islands, according to a copy of the order, seen [here](#). This means the halt's expiration will leave Virgin Islands renters

exposed to eviction.

Since Governor Albert Bryan's last order on rent evictions expired on Sept. 27, barring an extension of the CDC's order, Virgin Islanders would have to fend for themselves in court — leading to the possible overwhelming of the judicial system with eviction cases.

The good news is, according to the Wall Street Journal — citing housing-industry executives — the CDC will likely extend its order. Additionally, many landlords believe they are more likely to recover some rent by working with tenants as compared to evicting them.

The Consortium knows of at least one case of a landlord who is seeking to evict a tenant through the judicial system. According to WSJ, while the CDC order helps keep renters in their homes, it doesn't prevent landlords from beginning the eviction process in court.

Details of the current order

Renters must express that they would likely become homeless if they are evicted.

The Trump administration said renters could face jail time if they lie in the declarations. According to The New York Times, an administration official told reporters the order was not an invitation to stop paying rent and said renters should pay a portion of the rent if possible. Renters will still owe accrued rent and face penalties for failing to pay, the administration official told reporters, according to the Times.

The CDC order says renters could be evicted "for reasons other than not paying rent or making a housing payment."

In July, Americans owed more than \$21.5 billion in past due rent, estimated global advisory firm Stout, Risius and Ross.