

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Caribbean Will Start to Receive Cruise Ships In June But Virgin Islands are Subject To C.D.C Guidelines and Are Unlikely To Be Part of Initial Voyages

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Kyle Murphy **March 25, 2021**



During Anthony Ottley's, the Intern President and CEO of the West Indian Company Limited, Report in Thursday's W.I.C.O. Board of Directors meeting he provided an update of the potential return of Cruise Ships to the Virgin Islands. While some cruise ships will begin voyages in June to other destinations around the Caribbean the Virgin Islands are subject to C.D.C approval for sailing to begin.

Royal Caribbean notified W.I.C.O that they will begin cruising in June sailing out of the Bahamas, Bermuda and St. St. Maarten. "Unfortunate for the Virgin Islands at this time we are still governed under C.D.C. rules, which negates us from having the ability at this point to berth those ships on any sort of itinerary." said Mr. Ottley

While it is still a fluid situation and things can change Mr. Ottley does not think it will change enough for the Virgin Islands to take ships on that date.

The Virgin Islands cruise ship partners expressed the importance of getting the C.D.C. No Sail Order lifted so that sails can start back in Florida because they don't see sailing or making home ports outside of the U.S.A. according to Mr. Ottley. "They may have to do that in the meantime until C.D.C does make a change" he added.

Mr. Ottley spoke about some of the things cruise lines are doing in terms of requiring vaccinations. He said Virgin Cruises has stated that they will have 100 percent of the crew and passengers required to be vaccinated. Royal Caribbean are looking at this same requirement but they did not say that it would definitely happen. He estimated that cruise ships will only be allowed a capacity of 50 percent but until that number is finalized it will be hard to determine how many passengers will be on each ship.

Mr. Ottley states that the major cruise lines have complied with the C.D.C phased approach to restarting and are prepared to begin simulated trips but are awaiting the guidelines of the trips from the C.D.C. While last month the C.D.C announced that the technical guidelines for simulated trips would be released in a matter of weeks cruise lines are still awaiting them according to Mr. Ottley. This caused the cruise lines to further suspend their sailing dates to at least May 31, 2021.