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'Officers Will be Out in Force' to Shutdown Easter Beach Events, Including Camping, VIPD Warns

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The V.I. Police Department said this week its officers "will be out in force" to enforce Governor Albert Bryan's ban on Easter beach events, a warning to residents who may be thinking of flouting the order, which the governor said was put in place to quell the spread of Covid-19.

Said the V.I.P.D. in its release: "Only fishermen are authorized to be on the beach during beach closure hours to access their vessels or cast their nets for fishing purposes. There shall be no picnics, no parties, no disc jockey music or equipment, no bonfires, no cooking, no barbecuing, or grilling allowed on any beach in the territory at any time during the state of emergency. Our officers will be out in force to ensure that everyone adheres to this order."

In [announcing the ban](#) on Easter camping and other beach activities, Mr. Bryan said, "While I realize that this is a time-honored tradition for Virgin Islanders, we can't afford as a community to take a step backward in our battle against the spread of COVID-19 and especially not while we are vaccinating our population and working toward achieving the herd immunity that will let us put this pandemic behind us."

He added, "Our traditions, like Easter camping and our carnival and festivals, will return, and I want everyone in the territory to stay safe and Covid-free so we all will be able to enjoy them once again. We have to stay on task with shutting down this virus. I want to thank our residents in advance for their continued cooperation and for making this sacrifice to protect the lives of our friends, families, and loved ones."

Government House said Mr. Bryan cited the plights of cities inundated by spring breakers ignoring masking guidelines and social distancing requirements, resulting in hundreds of arrests in cities such as Miami Beach.

"It would be a tragedy if what was meant to be a time of family and goodwill turned into a super-spreader event resulting in the infection or unfortunate death of even a single Virgin Islander," he said.

According to the Gov't House release, under the current public health state of emergency, beachgoers are required to vacate the territory's beaches by 5:00 p.m. on holidays and weekends to help curtail the occurrence of mass gatherings and other activities that violate the public health guidelines issued by the Centers for Disease Control and V.I. Department of Health.

The current guidelines issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Virgin Islands Department of Health call for residents to wear masks in public, stay 6 feet apart, and not gather in large groups.