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## VITEMA Begins Long-Awaited Installation of Tsunami Sirens; Completion Expected by July

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### Tsunami Warning Siren By. VITEMA

The Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency, in partnership with American Signal Corporation on Tuesday began the long-awaited process of installing new tsunami sirens, with placement and systems checks taking place at the former Cancryn Junior High School on St. Thomas followed by Magen's Bay and Crown Bay.

VITEMA said the new tsunami sirens are being installed atop specially designed steel reinforced poles and feature a series of warning tones with a voice alert option should instructions be warranted. Placement of the new sirens are along the various shorelines of St. Thomas, St. Croix, St. John, and Water Island for the purpose of providing immediate evacuation warnings to

swimmers, shoreside residents and businesses.

The sirens are meant to alert the community to immediate danger and to proceed to higher ground, preferably 100 feet above sea level or more. As each siren is installed, the public can expect a brief test of the system.

VITEMA said tsunamis can move hundreds of miles per hour and hit land with waves topping 100 feet in height. Since 1842, more than 3,500 people have lost their lives to tsunamis in the Caribbean. In recent years, there has been an explosive population growth and influx of tourists along the Caribbean coasts increasing tsunami vulnerability of the region.

Tsunami alarms are activated through the VITEMA 911 call-centers based on alerts from the National Tsunami Warning Center (NTWC) based in Palmer, Alaska, VITEMA made known.

For all up to the minute emergency updates, residents are advised to subscribe to ALERT VI at [www.vitema.vi.gov](http://www.vitema.vi.gov) The siren installations are expected to be completed and the system fully on-line by the first of July 2021.