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These are the 'Binding Protocols' Established Between the Bryan Administration and Cruise Lines Traveling to the USVI

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A small welcome ceremony was held for the Celebrity Equinox on Aug. 18, 2021, the first cruise ship to dock on St. Croix in 18 months. By. ERNICE GILBERT FOR VI CONSORTIUM

The Bryan administration on Sunday announced what it said were "binding protocols" that regulate cruise ship visits to the territory.

The administration also announced that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention had responded to the governor's request seeking technical instructions for the next phases of the Framework for Conditional Sailing Order (CSO) that guide the resumption of cruise ship

excursions at U.S. ports.

According to Gov't House, in response the governor, the CDC said it does not plan to release any further documents for Phase 4, the last phase of the CSO, which says cruise ship operators with approved Covid-19 Conditional Sailing Certificate applications may sail with passengers following the CSO.

“Instead, CDC will update online documents to incorporate changes to quarantine, testing, color-coding status and lessons learned from simulated voyages,” according to the CDC’s response to Governor Bryan.

The CDC’s letter to the governor also notes that as of July 13, 2021, the CDC’s Maritime Unit has received port agreements from cruise operators representing 11 brands, including Royal Caribbean International; Carnival Cruise Lines; Celebrity Cruises; Disney Cruise Line; Holland America Line; MSC Cruises; Norwegian Cruise Line; Oceania Cruises; Princess Cruises; Regent Seven Seas Cruises; and Bahamas Paradise Cruise Line.

Below, the binding protocols regulating cruise ship visits to the territory:

- All guests 12 and older must be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 for the ship to be allowed entry to the port.
- The ship should have a minimum of 85% vaccination among the entire population of guests and crew onboard, and any percentages below the 85% requires contact and consultation with the DOH.
- Excluding passengers who willingly provide proof of vaccination, all disembarking passengers (age 2 or older) must have provided to cruise lines a negative COVID-19 test result taken within five days prior to arrival into the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- Any positive passenger, or identified close contact passenger, must remain in isolation on the cruise ship.
- All passengers must agree to all established rules and requirements while inside the restricted area.
- Access to all vaccination cards will be provided to the DOH Division of Epidemiology in advance for validation.
- Emergency contractors required for critical ship maintenance can be exempted of the vaccination requirement, as long as the ship remains above the vaccination threshold; however, the DOH requires emergency contractors to have a negative COVID-19 test result taken within five days prior to arrival into the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- A cruise line operator’s inadvertent errors with regard to a guest’s vaccination status shall not prevent the vessel from making port provided that in all such cases the cruise operator must report all discrepancies to the DOH immediately after the error is detected or at least 12 hours prior to arrival; subject the passenger(s) whose vaccination status has caused such discrepancies to the same testing protocols required for unvaccinated guests; and receive approval from the DOH to be allowed entry to the port.

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