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# St. Croix Residents Affected as BMV Staff Protest Over Unhealthy Work Environment

Government / **Published On August 03, 2023 03:21 PM /**

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**Work Comes to a Halt at St. Croix BMV as Employees Protest Safety Concerns. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM**

Employees of the V.I. Bureau of Motor Vehicle on St. Croix staged a sickout for two consecutive days, protesting the poor working conditions at the temporary office trailers they are forced to operate from. The protest brought essential services such as vehicle registration to a standstill, impacting local residents.

Holding up banners reflecting their grievances and their need for a safe and healthy work environment, the employees' demands were clear. One of the posters read, "Need a new building. No Trailer!" and another, "Our Health is priority." Other banners showcased the messages, "Our

safety comes first," and "Our health over the government's wealth." Another sign referencing a previous injury on-site due to infrastructure decay read, "No more mold, more holes."

Speaking on behalf of the BMV employees, Nicole Plante outlined the reasons for the protest. "We are having a sit out. It started on August 2nd because of the conditions of the trailers that we were in," she explained. "This has been an ongoing issue. We have several grievances filed in regards to the conditions of the trailers."

According to Plante, the trailers, originally intended to be a temporary solution, suffer from numerous safety and health issues, including holes in the floor, mold growth in the ceiling, termite infestations, water leaks, and insufficient restroom facilities. The trailers' poor air conditioning often requires employees to bring their own fans.



Unsafe conditions spark employee protest at St. Croix Motor Vehicle Bureau on Wednesday, Aug. 2 and Thursday Aug. 3, 2023. (Credit: V.I. Consortium)

"We don't complain a lot, but enough is enough. We work hard. We are the second agency that brings in the most money for the government. So to be working like this in trailers which is supposed to be temporary is unacceptable," Plante added. "We need a structure, a building. Some areas you have to tip toe because the ground is sinking in."

Almost the entire staff, including the manager, joined the protest. "Our goal is to be placed somewhere temporarily where we can be comfortable and be of service to the public. We need a place. The focus is being someplace safe," said Plante.

At this point, Government House has yet to respond to the unfolding situation at BMV, which is currently affecting residents who rely on the bureau's services.

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