

## INTRODUCTION

This document has been created for villas to provide current information on the COVID-19 disease and guidelines that assist in limiting its spread within the population. The advice is built on present global scientific data and expertise opinions. This material is subject to change as active global research is ongoing and The Government of The Virgin Islands is committed to providing up-to-date information on the new coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2 virus) and the disease it causes, COVID-19.

## GENERAL

- 1.** The British Virgin Islands' COVID-19 hotline is 1 (284) 852-7650.
- 2.** Be informed and stay updated about the COVID-19 disease and its impact locally, regionally and globally.
- 3.** Work with local health authorities in combating the spread of the disease. Source up to date, credible information via the Government of the Virgin Islands website (<https://gov.vg/covid-19>), Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) website ([www.CARPHA.org](http://www.CARPHA.org)), Center of Disease Control (CDC) website (<https://bit.ly/3iAdQVY> or World Health Organization (W.H.O) website (<https://bit.ly/3d3S4Zy>)
- 4.** Maintain records that will assist in tracing who has been in contact with any confirmed COVID-19 case on your property. Review and implement record keeping processes of guests and staff movements. Keep these records for a minimum of 90 days. Records such as guest registration, staff work assignments, document key control procedures such as security camera closed circuit tapes or electronic lock records.
- 5.** All staff shall report promptly to the manager or local health authority of any suspected COVID-19 cases on property.
- 6.** Provide educational material to staff relating to the virus and the COVID-19 disease to assist with:
  - a.** recognising associated signs and symptoms
  - b.** how the disease is transmitted
  - c.** safe handling of any potential exposure to the disease
  - d.** the difference between cleaning and disinfecting

**GENERAL**  
(CONT'D)

e. the types of surfaces and length of time the disease can survive on surfaces et cetera.

- 7.** Employees shall adhere to all new procedures related to COVID-19 such as:
- a. Cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch surfaces
  - b. Reporting guests or staff with symptoms and exposure history compatible with COVID-19 and social distancing measures.

**8.** Employees shall be informed about and trained in the necessary steps of reporting guests or other staff who may have symptoms and exposure history, compatible with COVID-19 to the relevant health authorities.

**9.** The Health Department will determine whether the Villa's set up allows for its use as a medical quarantine facility if one of the guests tests positive for COVID-19 during their stay. Villa management will establish a quarantine plan that will be approved by Environmental Health prior to opening to ensure that strict procedures for cleaning, for provisioning and for medical checks are in place and adhered to. This is to minimize risk to staff and others.

The quarantined space must be inspected by the Environmental Health Division (EHD). If a suspected COVID-19 case is identified on the property, follow the safety protocols established for safe quarantine. Basic cleaning and disinfecting agents will suffice in killing the virus and other pathogenic microorganisms.

**10.** Staff must always have access to the necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) for use.

## GENERAL (CONT'D)

11. High-touch surfaces, tools and equipment (desks, tables, chairs, knobs, door handles, appliances, sinks, etc.) should be sanitized during general cleaning.
12. Ensure that adequate signage is placed throughout the villas to inform about protocols and give reminders and guidelines on required behaviour, general etiquette and activity for the safety of all.
13. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer should be provided at entry points.

## LEGAL

1. Public Health License to operate must be conspicuously displayed on the property.
2. COVID-19 Compliance Certificate and/or Tourism License must be prominently displayed by all persons/entities required to have one.
3. The property should be in good repair with floors, walls, ceiling and roofs intact. The building should be bat and insect proof.
4. Ventilation should be adequate throughout the property whether natural, mechanical or air conditioning is used. Windows used for ventilation should be able to open and equipped with fine mesh screens.
5. Air conditioning systems should be well maintained and in working order and cleaned/disinfected at the prescribed intervals.
6. Approved Environmental Health Department disinfectants, sanitisers and PPE should be used.

## OVERSIGHT

### A. SCHEDULED REGULATION

The BVI Tourist Board will schedule inspections to ensure adherence to the current protocols. Electronic notice will be sent to the email address provided by the Travel or Tourism Business giving at least three working days before the scheduled inspection. Rescheduling of inspections will be at the discretion of the Director of Tourism or his/her designate.

### B. UNSCHEDULED REGULATION

Unscheduled spot inspections will be conducted by the Government of the Virgin Islands Social Distancing Taskforce in accordance with the relevant Statutory Instruments governing its existence.

## UNDERSTANDING BUSINESS RISK & RISK MANAGEMENT

Tourism Businesses must seek to reduce risks to the lowest reasonably practicable level by taking preventative measures. Employers:

1. Must establish procedure for daily screening of staff and visitors
2. Must identify a quarantine area for both staff/visitor who display symptoms.
3. Must submit daily report to the Epidemiology Unit on health status of guests and staff.
4. Must establish procedures with for contact tracing.
5. Should complete a COVID-19 risk management plan. The plan should include detailed measures to be implemented in order to address all areas of operation thereby mitigating the spread of COVID-19 among guests and staff, taking into consideration but not limited to the following:
  - The risk management plan should be adaptable.
  - The risk management plan should continuously be integrated into staff orientation and briefing.
  - The risk management plan should take into consideration a system for checking on guest welfare.

## UNDERSTANDING BUSINESS RISK & RISK MANAGEMENT (CONT'D)

- The risk management plan should outline procedures for handling the management of potentially contaminated linen and clothing items.
- The risk management plan should outline procedures for solid waste management including biomedical waste.
- The risk management plan must make provisions for more frequent cleaning and sanitizing of equipment used in the handling and dispensing of foods.
- The risk management plan should provide a comprehensive accident, emergency plan for the property.
- The risk management plan should provide a comprehensive natural disaster plan for the property.

## SAFETY

1. Are emergency exits clear at all times?
2. Are fire extinguishers available and serviced?
3. If staff are housed on-site, social distancing protocol of 6 (six) feet must be followed.

## HOUSEKEEPING, MAINTENANCE AND LAUNDRY

1. Document and ensure that housekeeping and maintenance staff are trained and that they that they strictly adhere to protocols.
2. Housekeeping and maintenance staff must be assigned and trained in the use of PPE that is specific to the task being undertaken. Adequate and appropriate PPEs are to provide for tasks to be undertaken (face masks, gloves, disposable aprons, disposable gowns, face shields, shoes and shoe liners).
3. Housekeeping and maintenance staff must be trained in proper hygiene techniques after removal of PPE.
4. Rooms of perceived well (not sick) guests should be cleaned first.
5. A dedicated specifically trained cleaning crew must be assigned to clean room(s) housing guests, which fit the case definition for COVID-19.

## HOUSEKEEPING, MAINTENANCE AND LAUNDRY (CONT'D)

6. Ensure all potentially contaminated areas are appropriately cleaned and sanitised using appropriate disinfectants according to manufacturer's instructions.
7. Housekeeping and maintenance staff must not enter villa unless specifically requested or approved by management.
8. Ensure that housekeeping and maintenance are given SOPs and a checklist of areas to be cleaned and sanitised including the following; toilets, face basins and vanity, faucets, showers, shower heads, all furnishings, chairs, bedside tables, lamps, light switches, base boards, televisions, remotes, telephones, doors, door knobs, handrails carpets etc.
9. Ensure that an adequate supply of cleaning agents is provided to clean and sanitise.
10. Ensure the regular cleaning and disinfecting of areas with frequent or heavy usage.
11. Ensure that rooms are adequately ventilated during cleaning.
12. Ensure that air conditioning units and filters are cleaned and disinfected according to an approved schedule maintenance plan submitted to the Environmental Health Department.
13. Rooms should be cleaned according to these protocols at minimum.
14. Ensure that window coverings can be easily cleaned and sanitized
15. All unused linen and other items in guest rooms must be thoroughly laundered before new guest accommodation.
16. All bed linens and laundry are washed at no lower than (58 C) and in accordance with EHD Guidance
17. Guest linens are to be removed from guest rooms in single use sealed bags (including extra blankets, robes, etc.) and taken straight to the laundry facility.
18. Dirty linen is to be bagged in the guest room to eliminate excess contact while being transported to the laundry facility
19. Housekeeping and maintenance service only upon departure or on request (guest must not be in villa)



## HOUSEKEEPING, MAINTENANCE AND LAUNDRY

(CONT'D)

20. Disposable promotional material is to be replaced and disposed of after each guest
21. Hand sanitizer and masks should be added to guest room amenities.
22. Management should provide specially marked sealable bags for linen and other clothing items that are potentially contaminated by guests displaying signs and symptoms of COVID-19. A specific protocol must be documented and followed for these circumstances.
23. Housekeeping staff must always wear aprons and gloves and should use masks as much as possible. They should attempt to maintain social distance from each other and from guests if proximity is unavoidable.
24. Housekeeping staff must avoid allowing their bodies to touch dirty linen or linen from used rooms.
25. Staff uniforms, linens and all other materials must be laundered with detergent and hot water of at least (58 C)
26. Cloths, mops and all other equipment should not be reused before being properly cleaned and sanitised.
27. Use disposable cleaning materials as much as possible.

## SWIMMING POOL & HOT TUBS

1. The villa should ensure the adequate disinfection of swimming pools and maintenance of disinfecting chemicals at the higher end of the recommended disinfection spectrum as indicated by the Environmental Health Department.
2. Pool chlorine and pH levels should be checked daily for private/villa pools.
3. All outdoor and pool side chairs and tables should be sanitized during general cleaning.

## WATER SAFETY

Water quality is an essential part of protecting the staff and guests at the villa. A common water-borne disease that infects the lungs is called Legionellosis which is caused by the Legionella bacteria. The bacterium grows in aquatic environments and thrives in warm water systems that has not been used for a long time, warm, damp places (cooling towers) or water that lacks adequate disinfectant.

2. It is vital that lodging facilities pay close attention to their water system. Preventative measures, swift mitigation, when necessary, ongoing monitoring and detailed record keeping will keep guests and employees safe.

## HOW TO PREVENT LEGIONNAIRE'S DISEASE

1. Create a 'Water Management Programme' for your villa this will include:
  - a. Identifying areas in a building where Legionella bacteria can grow and spread.
  - b. Reduce the risk of illness by managing and monitoring the water system.
  - c. Take corrective actions as soon as risks are identified.
2. Control temperature of the water
  - a. Avoid temperatures between 77°F (25°C) and 113°F (45°C).
  - b. Maintain cold water below 68°F (20°C).
  - c. Maintain hot water above 122°F (50°C).
3. Empty the water boiling tank:
  - a. The water in the boiler would have been stagnant during the lockdown period thereby creating an environment for Legionella to proliferate.





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## SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

1. Tightly fitted garbage bins and replaceable bags/liners should be used throughout the property.
2. Secure bins that use sensors or foot pedals to minimize hand contact.
3. A comprehensive solid waste management plan must be developed and submitted to the Environmental Health Department.

## GROUND TRANSPORTATION USAGE

All chauffeurs, shuttles and taxi service providers and their vehicles must have a COVID-19 Compliance Certificate and be compliant with the relevant regulations.

