

## PRESS RELEASE

Tel: (284)468-2730

Official Government Website:

<https://gov.vg>

# The State of Maritime Safety in the Virgin Islands Discussed at Meeting

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The Premier's Office hosted a critical Maritime Safety Meeting, bringing key stakeholders together to discuss the state of maritime safety in the Virgin Islands.

The meeting, held on May 15, sought to address pressing marine safety concerns, enhance preventative measures, and foster collaboration among agencies and organisations committed to safeguarding the Virgin Islands' waters and marine environment.

Permanent Secretary, Mrs. Carolyn Stoutt Igwe, stated that the meeting was another effort in Government's commitment to comply with the implementation of International Maritime Organisation's (IMO) Instruments III Code, the mandatory IMO Casualty Investigation Code and provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act.

Mrs. Stoutt Igwe said, "Maritime safety remains a top priority for the Virgin Islands. Today's meeting demonstrates our commitment to fostering collaboration and ensuring that our waters are safe for residents, visitors, and future generations."

The PS encouraged participants to continue to work together to protect the Territory's marine environment and those who depend on it.

Chief Marine Accident Investigation Officer, Mr. Jerome Padmore, expressed his satisfaction with the high level of participation and noted that this engagement reflects the strong interest and dedication to improving and developing safety within the maritime community. He reiterated his steadfast commitment to promoting safety and accountability throughout the maritime industry.

Mr. Padmore also provided insights into the role and process of Marine Safety Accident Investigations. His presentation highlighted the importance of thorough investigations in identifying root causes and preventing future incidents.

During the meeting, select stakeholders made presentations on their respective roles in promoting marine safety, preventing marine accidents and responding to marine incidents. The Virgin Islands Shipping and Maritime Authority (VISMA) presented safety strategies to enhance maritime operations, emphasising strict protocols for water users.

The Royal Virgin Islands Police Force reported on incidents and measures to boost safety. Virgin Islands Fire and Rescue discussed lifeguard operations, while Virgin Islands Search and Rescue focused on community outreach for safety awareness at sea. The Ministry of Environment raised awareness about marine pollution, urging collaboration for resource protection.

The Marine Association reaffirmed its commitment to safety in the charter industry. The H. Lavity Stoutt Community College shared educational initiatives for marine professionals, and Kids and the Sea (KATS) highlighted their programme which teaches boating safety to children through engaging camps. Other organisations present were: Governor's office, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, BVI Ports Authority, National Parks Trust, 911 Call Handling Centre, Fishermen's Association, the BVI Charter Yacht Society, Nanny Cay, and The Moorings.

The Premier's Office reaffirmed its commitment to supporting initiatives that promote safety, sustainability, and education in the maritime sector.

For further information on marine safety, please contact the Premier's Office at **284-468-2087**.