

PRESS RELEASE

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Premier's Office Hosts Maritime Safety Meeting on Virgin Gorda

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The Premier's Office has met with key stakeholders on Virgin Gorda and the surrounding islands, islets, and cays to discuss the current state of maritime safety in the Virgin Islands.

The meeting was the second in a series and addressed urgent marine safety issues and preventative measures. It also encouraged collaboration among agencies and organisations dedicated to protecting the waters and marine environment of Virgin Gorda.

The session addressed maritime safety deficiencies and concerns with the aim of improving legislative and enforcement resources across the maritime sector. A similar discussion was held on Tortola on May 15 with the aim of helping to initiate the process of enhancing maritime safety in the Territory.

Chief Marine Safety Accident Investigator, Mr. Jerome Padmore emphasised the importance of collaboration to protect lives and livelihoods at sea.

Mr. Padmore said, "Maritime safety is a collective responsibility; there is a need for realistic and coordinated goals to enhance emergency response, foster a culture of reporting, and improved safety standards throughout the Virgin Islands. Minor safety lapses, such as neglecting to wear lifejackets or failing to use kill cords, can have serious consequences. I urge all attendees to adopt a prevention-first mindset."

Several organisations were represented at the meeting including the Virgin Islands Shipping and Maritime Authority (VISMA); The Royal Virgin Islands Police Force (RVIPF) Marine Unit; The BVI Tourist Board; Virgin Islands Fire and Rescue Lifeguard Services; Virgin Islands Search and Rescue (VISAR); the Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change (MENRCC); the Marine Association of the British Virgin Islands; Holt Maritime Consulting; and Kids and the Sea (KATS).

The Government of the Virgin Islands remains dedicated to ensuring the safety, security, and sustainable development of the Territory's maritime industry through effective leadership, strategic planning, and collaboration with key stakeholders, which are commitment to maritime safety and implementing higher safety standards within the industry. For further information, please contact the

Premier's Office at **284-468-2087**.

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