



PRESS RELEASE

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Virgin Gorda Dumpsite Temporarily Closed Following Fire

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The Ministry of Health and Social Development is advising the public that a fire occurred at the Virgin Gorda Dumpsite during the early morning hours of today July 3.

The Department of Waste Management is actively managing the incident in collaboration with the Virgin Islands Fire and Rescue Service, the BVI Airports Authority, the Water and Sewerage Department and local water truck operators to bring the fire under control and minimize its impact.

Fire officers remain on site carrying out suppression activities and securing the affected area to protect nearby residents, infrastructure, and surrounding properties. As a precautionary measure, the Virgin Gorda Dumpsite has been closed to the public until further notice while emergency response operations continue.

The Ministry wishes to assure the public that the safety of residents, emergency personnel and the surrounding community remain the highest priority. Relevant agencies will continue to monitor the situation closely and implement the necessary measures to safely contain the fire and restore normal operations as soon as possible.

Residents are asked to avoid the area to allow emergency personnel to carry out their work safely and efficiently.

The burning of waste materials is releasing smoke, airborne particulates and potentially hazardous fumes into the surrounding areas.

The public is strongly advised to remain vigilant. The following groups are at an increased risk of severe health complications from smoke inhalation and should take immediate precautions:

- Individuals with chronic respiratory illnesses (including asthma and COPD)
- Persons with underlying cardiovascular conditions
- Young children and infants
- The elderly

To minimize exposure to harmful particulates, residents and visitors in the affected areas should implement the following measures immediately:

- Shelter in Place: Remain indoors until the smoke clears.
- Secure Your Environment: Keep all windows and doors closed. If operating an air conditioner, close the fresh-air intake and set the system to recirculate indoor air.
- Limit Physical Exertion: Avoid outdoor exercise or strenuous physical activity that increases breathing rates.
- Use Proper Respiratory Protection: If you must go outside, preferably wear an N95 or KN95 mask. Standard surgical or cloth masks do not effectively filter fine smoke particles.

If you or a family member experience symptoms such as difficulty breathing, severe coughing, dizziness, nausea or an exacerbation of an underlying lung or heart condition, seek medical care immediately at the Iris O'Neal Medical Center. Contact the clinic at 440-1661 or 862-7750.

The Ministry of Health and Social Development is committed to improving the health of the people of the Virgin Islands.

For Additional Information Contact:

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