

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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# **VI Government Launches Discretionary Powers Policy Guide**

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# **GOV.**



The Government of the Virgin Islands has announced the official implementation of the Report to Guide the Proper and Lawful Exercise of Discretionary Powers.

The Discretionary Powers Policy Guide is an initiative designed to strengthen governance, transparency, and accountability throughout the Territory.

Deployment of this policy guide took place during the week of February 24 by issue to senior leaders and the wider public service underscoring the government's commitment to promoting responsible decision-making by public officials.

The guide was approved by Cabinet on May 22 last year and responds directly to several key recommendations from the Commission of Inquiry (COI) Report, reinforcing the government's ongoing efforts to build public trust and uphold good governance standards.

Premier Honourable Dr. Natalio D. Wheatley emphasised the importance of the initiative, stating, "This policy guide represents a critical step forward in further ensuring that the government of the Virgin Islands operates with the utmost integrity, accountability, and transparency. Our commitment to strengthening public trust through

responsible decision-making is at the heart of this initiative. By putting in place clear criteria and mechanisms for the exercise of discretionary powers, we are safeguarding the future of our territory and its people."

Ministers and senior public officials, including Permanent Secretaries and their deputies, are charged with ensuring that discretionary powers are exercised lawfully

and fairly as according to the guide, while the powers in themselves are not a source of corruption, their abuse can lead to malpractice, corruption, and a damaged public perception.

To mitigate these risks, senior public officials must identify the discretionary powers entrusted to their departments, ensuring appropriate control mechanisms, policies, and procedures are in place. Adopting these practices greatly diminishes the potential for the misuse of authority.

The policy guide further emphasises that public officials uphold procedural fairness for individuals affected by their decisions. Discretion must be exercised independently, without undue influence from third parties or unauthorised bodies. Additionally, discretionary powers should always be exercised within the limits of delegated authority and subject to proper scrutiny. The decision-making process must be grounded in reliable, relevant evidence that is capable of proving or disproving the issues at hand.

To facilitate the successful implementation of the policy, the Premier's Office has developed a comprehensive implementation plan that includes sensitisation and training programs to support public officials in the exercise of discretionary powers and reporting compliance in line with the new guidelines.

The government of the Virgin Islands remains deeply committed to fostering a transparent, accountable, and inclusive system of governance. By prioritising good governance and sustainable development, the government is working toward creating policies that drive economic growth, build public trust, and improve the overall well-being of residents. Through innovation and effective governance, the government of the Virgin Islands actively works to ensure a more resilient and brighter future for its people.

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## **Additional Documents or Media**

- [policy - a report to guide the proper and lawful exercise of discretionary powers in the virgin is](#)