GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

PRESS RELEASE

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Long Bay Early Warning Siren Improves Readiness

Persons in and around Long Bay are better equipped to respond to emergencies after an early warning siren was installed there in October. The unit brings the total number of outdoor early warning sirens in the Territory to 17.

Director of Disaster Management Mr. Jasen Penn said the new siren reflects the Virgin Islands' commitment to continuously improving access to early warnings in the Territory.

"Early warning sirens are one important component of the Virgin Islands National Early Warning Multi-hazard Alerting System because they reach persons who are outdoors, who may not have access to other alerting tools such as radio or mobile phones, and who may be visiting the VI for the first time," Mr. Penn said.

Outside of testing periods, the early warning sirens signal a major threat, and may be activated for tsunamis or other dangers that require the public's immediate attention, the Director said.

"Once persons hear the siren, they should immediately find details from the Department of Disaster Management. They can check our website, the DDM app, WhatsApp Channel, Facebook, or tune in to a local radio station to learn what steps to take," Mr. Penn said.

He added that not every danger can be signaled by a siren. For example, the safest course of action for coastal residents after an especially long or strong earthquake would be to evacuate inland or to higher ground.

Initial testing indicates this unit can be heard from the entrance to Long Bay Beach to portions of Smuggler's Cove. This new siren unit is integrated into the existing network, and successfully sounded during the October monthly test. Its alert tones can be heard approximately 2,500 feet away from the unit, depending on atmospheric conditions.

The Long Bay community was selected for this unit based on a dense coastal population and a gap in existing outdoor warning coverage, the Director noted, adding that site identification and installation of the new unit was a collaborative effort.

"I'm very grateful for all the technical experts and partners who shared their expertise and helped get this new siren installed," Mr. Penn said. "This is a community resource, and working together results in the greatest possible safety benefit for all." The director extended particular appreciation to the Office of the Deputy Governor; the Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change; and the BVI Electricity Corporation for their contributions.

MORE

The siren is primarily solar powered, which ensures it can operate in a power outage. The public is reminded that early warning sirens are designed to be heard by persons outdoors, and that it is essential to have multiple ways to get emergency updates. For a full calendar of 2026 system tests, visit www.bviddm.com/download/2026-system-tests/.

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About the Department of Disaster Management:

The Department of Disaster Management was established to protect lives and maintain a resilient, sustainable economy and society by fostering comprehensive disaster management and climate change adaptation as a way of life. The Virgin Islands disaster management programme is accredited by the Emergency Management Accreditation Programme.

Note to editors: Photos included

Caption 1: The new siren unit was installed on Friday, October 9, in Long Bay Tortola. (Credit: DDM)

Caption 2: A map showing the locations of the 17 early warning sirens throughout the Territory.

For Additional Information Contact:

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