

Legislature of the Virgin Islands

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The Honorable
Angel Bolques, Jr.
Senator-At-Large
35th Legislature of the Virgin Islands

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Committee on Housing, Transportation, & Telecommunication
Subcommittee on Energy & Infrastructure Development



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Senator At Large Angel Bolques Jr. on Emergency Shelter Information Ahead of Hurricane Season

VIRGIN ISLANDS - As the 2024 Atlantic Hurricane Season approaches, the Virgin Islands Human Services Department (DHS) has released vital information about emergency shelters across the U.S. Virgin Islands. It is crucial for residents to be aware of these shelters and their regulations to ensure safety and preparedness during potential storms. Senator At Large Angel Bolques Jr. emphasized the importance of being prepared: "Knowing the locations and regulations of our emergency shelters is critical for the safety of all residents. Proper Preparation can make all the difference when a hurricane strikes."

Short-Term and Long-Term Shelters

Emergency shelters are available to residents on both a short-term (pre-storm/pre-landfall) and long-term (post-storm/post-landfall) basis. The capacity of each shelter varies depending on the phase of the storm. Pre-storm shelters provide a safe place for those ordered to evacuate their homes and are meant to house residents for 12 to 72 hours until the storm passes. Residents are encouraged to bring their own sleeping supplies, as it may not be practical to move these supplies for short-term stays.

Post-storm shelters offer longer-term availability for residents displaced due to a disaster. These shelters usually open within 72 hours after landfall and may provide cots, blankets, pillows, meals, shower facilities, and health services.



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Shelter Regulations

Residents must follow specific rules at the shelters. No weapons, alcohol, or illegal drugs are allowed. Smoking is also prohibited. Residents are required to complete registration before entering. It is recommended that individuals bring a backpack or small travel bag with essentials such as clothing, blankets, phone chargers, medication, personal care items, and important documents.

"I urge everyone to familiarize themselves with the shelter regulations. Following these rules ensures a safe and orderly environment for everyone during a stressful time," stated Senator Bolques.

Accommodations Providing Medical Services

The V.I. Health Department (DOH) operates shelters for individuals who need medical care and those with special needs. These Medical Special Needs shelters are located at the Schneider Regional Medical Center on St. Thomas and the Career and Technical Education Center on St. Croix. Residents needing these services must register with DHS or contact DOH before arriving.

Emergency Housing Locations and Information

DHS has provided detailed information on shelter locations and capacities across the territory:

St. Thomas: Ivanna Eudora Kean High School and Lockhart Elementary School/Cancryn Junior High offer pre-landfall capacities of 782 and 248, respectively. Post-landfall capacities reduce to 390 and 123. Lockhart Elementary also offers pet-friendly sheltering.

St. Croix: The St. Croix Educational Complex and D.C. Canegata Recreation Center have pre-landfall capacities of 1,724 and 161, respectively, reducing to 631 and 80 post-landfall. The St. Croix Educational Complex is also pet-friendly.

St. John: Gifft Hill School and Adrian Senior Center provide pre-landfall capacities of 180 and 15, respectively, reducing to 90 and 8 post-landfall.

Water Island: The Water Island Fire House offers a post-landfall capacity of 53 spaces.

Canine, Cats, & Critters provide additional pet sheltering support on St. John.

Senator Bolques emphasized, "Review the shelter information before the hurricane season begins. Preparation is not just about having a plan but about ensuring the safety and well-being of our entire community. Let's stay vigilant, informed, and safe this hurricane season."

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