

Tortola, Virgin Islands, November 16, 2009 (DDM) - At 9:50am, the National Emergency Operation Center (NEOC) was activated at Level 1. Heavy rains and thunderstorms will continue to affect the Virgin Islands throughout the day and into the evening. The soil is already heavily saturated, and the Territory is under a Flash Flood Warning. A Flash Flood Warning means that flooding is very likely to occur in some low lying areas.

All schools are closed at this time. The Government has stated that all essential Service Personnel are asked to report to work and, through the Ministry of Communications and Works, has urged the Public to please stay off the roads, especially in the low lying areas. The roads in the upper level areas, such as the Ridge Road, can be used. Government workers seeking more information are asked to contact the Deputy Governor's Office.

Driving conditions are extremely dangerous, and Emergency Response Personnel have already rescued persons stuck in flood waters. The roads along the Sir Francis Drake Highway, in Fish Bay, Pasea, and from Pockwood Pond to Duffs Bottom (more specifically, Hannah's and Palestina Estates) are flooded with water, fallen branches and other debris.

The power has been restored on most of Tortola and is currently being restored on Virgin Gorda.

Persons operating marine vessels are asked to exercise caution as squalls have the potential to impair vision on open water and capsize small vessels. The Director of National Parks Trust has informed the public that all National Parks are closed.

Please continue to visit the Department of Disaster Management's website, <http://www.bviddm.com> for further information.

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