

ST. KITTS & NEVIS

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Government Declares a State of Emergency Tonight at 7:00pm for the Next 14 Days

Basseterre, St. Kitts (March 28, 2020) – At the request of the Prime Minister Dr. the Hon. Timothy Harris, the Governor General of St. Kitts & Nevis has declared that, effective as of 7:00 p.m. tonight Saturday, March 28, 2020, a State of Emergency will be in effect. This will restrict the freedom of movement of all citizens and residents, who will be subject to a curfew between the hours of 7:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m. each day for the next 14 days. This is part of the Federal Government's scaled up response to contain and control the COVID-19 virus and minimize harm to its people.

The Emergency Powers (COVID-19) Regulations require every person to remain confined to their place of residence, inclusive of their yard space, to avoid contact outside of their family except in stipulated circumstances such as essential travel to the doctor, grocery store, bank, credit union, money services, business, pharmacy or to refuel vehicles. The Regulations also require the closure of non-essential businesses and regulate the hours of opening for essential services. For a complete listing of essential businesses, click [here](#) to read section 5 of the official Emergency Powers (COVID-19) Regulations document.

St. Kitts & Nevis has also imposed social and physical distancing protocols as part of the increased response. Businesses will be required to observe a physical distance of 6 feet between its customers inside and outside of their businesses. Following a meeting with the operators of the 3 bus lines and ferry operators, given the congestion in public transport vehicles and the potential for contagion, certain restrictions have been imposed to protect operators and their patrons of no more than 1 passenger per row.

Regarding the public service, all essential workers must report to work during the time of the State of Emergency. The Secretary of Cabinet will determine any other category required to report for duty.

To ensure that persons are faithfully complying with the curfew and other restrictions, strong penalties including fines of up to \$5000 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 6 months can be imposed on those who fail to comply with the Regulations.

While it is highly uncommon to restrict free movement, this is an unprecedented time and the dangers that confront the Federation demand that Government takes serious actions to confront and overcome this pandemic. These strong measures are in place for 14 days, in the first instance, and Government shall continue to evaluate and adapt the Regulations as necessary as the situation evolves.

As the result of actions by local experts, the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) and the World Health Organization (WHO), St. Kitts & Nevis was able to keep the virus offshore until as recently as March 25, 2020, when two Kittitian nationals arrived from New York and were tested positive for COVID-19. In fact, St. Kitts & Nevis was the last place in the Americas to confirm positive cases of COVID-19. This is due to its “Life First” strategy by limiting cruise ships and taking precautionary measures with commercial airline passengers arriving from designated hot spots or displaying symptoms of respiratory illness, quarantining or refusing entry as warranted. Once these two cases of COVID-19 were imported into the Federation, the Federal Government needed to become more aggressive in its actions and this State of Emergency was declared.

The borders of St. Kitts & Nevis are closed from 11:59 p.m. on March 25 to April 7, 2020 to commercial air and sea vessels. Travellers are advised to contact their travel advisor, travel provider, hotel and/or airline for information about policies for rescheduling trips. Our hearts are with you, as we are all in this together. We look forward to once again welcoming you to the sun-kissed splendour of St. Kitts & Nevis. In the meantime, we ask all persons to stay informed about the latest news and developments relating to COVID-19 and to take all recommended precautions to stay safe and healthy.

For more information on COVID-19, please visit www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019, www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html and/or <http://carpha.org/What-We-Do/Public-Health/Novel-Coronavirus>. For more information about St. Kitts, visit www.stkittstourism.kn.

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