

March 18, 2022

Dear Friend of IGY:

We have some very exciting news to share ...

**The US Virgin Islands is allowing entry for yacht crew without B1 / B2 Visas.**

Temporary changes to the entry requirements are currently in place for the U.S. Virgin Islands directly related to professional vessel crew without B1/B2 or C-1/D visas. The parole program, identified by the US Customs and Border Protection (USVI Customs Zone) as the Significant Public Benefit Parole or "SPBP", allows vessels manned by professional crew without B1/B2 or C-1/D visas to cruise the US Virgin Islands for up to six (6) months.

**Temporary Pilot Program**

For the next six (6) months, yachts seeking to enter the US Virgin Islands can apply for the parole program which is purposed for single entry. While multiple entry is possible, it is not the general intent of the program. Also, entry to the United States, Puerto Rico, or Puerto Rican waters is not permitted for paroled crew members visiting the US Virgin Islands.

The parole program is applied for at entry, along with a \$75.00USD fee per person payable to the USCBP officer, with each crew member required to show his or her seaman's book. Each re-entry thereafter requires a fresh, new application with the same requirements.

The US Customs and Border Patrol has released this information just a few short days after the US Virgin Islands Department of Health has lifted its general mask mandate.

**St. Thomas, USVI Specific**

"This is distinctly welcome news for many professionally crewed vessels cruising throughout the IGY Marinas network," said Phil Blake, CMM, Marina General Manager for Yacht Haven Grande Marina. "We cater to large yachts world-wide and the SPBP program allows vessels to visit the US Virgin Islands who may not have previously done so, likely due to the difficulty of obtaining B1/B2 or C-1/D visas."

It is important to note that yachts over 300 GRT remain subject to normal US Coast Guard requirements, as well as APHIS requirements for all size vessels.

The SPBP parole program is only available at three locations in St. Thomas with the ability to obtain biometric data, one of which being Yacht Haven Grande Marina, the host of the recently successful, Caribbean Charter Yacht Show, launched December 2021.

**Exciting Potential**

"IGY Marinas is very excited of the potential permanency of this pilot program" expresses Bert Fowles, IGY Marinas Vice President of Marketing. "IGY serves as host to many superyachts that travel internationally, and these changes would allow European vessels to participate in this year's show."



Yacht Haven Grande Marina will provide guidance to captains of vessels submitting applications for the parole program, however, it is USCBP that determines parole eligibility of an applicant – the marina is not responsible for denied entries. Anyone previously deported or denied entry to the mainland USA, convicted of a serious offence, or are a national of a special interest country, will not be granted a parole entry. Also, vessel captains should be aware that they will need to guarantee that anyone not granted parole will be safeguarded to the vessel for the duration of the stay or depart St. Thomas directly to an international destination not via the United States.

This is an exciting, unprecedented event for the US Virgin Islands – one that allows for greater economic benefit to the duty-free island of St. Thomas in the US Virgin Islands.

As this is a test program - all protocols and guidelines must be followed exactly as advised by the relevant authorities.

Sincerely,

IGY Team

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