

Last week the Cabinet Secretary signed an order for all Civil servants to wear mask or face covering. (Both nose and mouth **MUST** be covered)

Beginning Monday, January 4th 2021, public servants were required to wear masks on the job, and multiple private establishments have also put in place similar regulations for staff and members of the public seeking to access their premises.

Reports from St. Vincent and the Grenadines state, the majority of persons in Kingstown, perhaps as many as eight out of every 10, were observed to be wearing masks.

A memorandum issued by the Government on December 31 reads that on the recommendation of the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Simone Keizer-Beache, the Cabinet has directed that with effect from January 4, all employees of the state are required to wear appropriate "masks or facial coverings while they are at work".

Public officers are further "strongly advised" to wear masks while in public, on public transportation and in situations where social distancing is not possible.

Visitors to public offices must wear masks or facial coverings, and they must wear these so that they cover both their nose and mouth. Masks must not be removed during their visits.

Additionally, all protocols that had been previously recommended are to be enforced, i.e., the social distancing of three to six ft, proper sanitizing of hands as one gains entry to offices, and avoiding physical contact.

Public officers experiencing flu-like symptoms are asked to stay at home. Similarly, customers experiencing these are asked not to visit Government offices. I am hoping that the citizens of St. Vincent and the Grenadines do their part and therefore, stop the increase of this virus.

This memorandum is signed by Kattian Barnwell-Scott, Cabinet Secretary.

This declaration heeds the advice of the CMO, who spoke on the topic last week Wednesday, one day after two new positive cases of Covid-19 with no history of travel had been confirmed.

Contract tracing began following the discovery of these cases, and so far, six cases have been confirmed in this local cluster.

"Right now, anybody going out there must assume, until proven otherwise, even as we are still doing investigations, they must assume that they are at increased risk until proven otherwise, and they must wear their masks and they must insist that when they attend events, that the proprietors or organizers keep a registry," said the CMO.

"They're (the Health Services Sub-Committee of NEMO and the Ministry of Health) advising quite strongly that all places which are serving the public, that whether in the private or public spaces, whether private business or in the Government, or state enterprises, that we should wear masks," the Prime Minister stated while speaking on NBC radio on December 31 2020.

"This particular moment, we have to let the proper contact tracing be done and the Ministry of Health, the Health Services Subcommittee, the Chief Medical Officer, and Medical Officer of Health, they have been doing quite a good job and we must listen to them, we must heed their advice, and what they are asking is reasonable in the circumstances," he stated. And decent and law-abiding citizen must agree with the words of the Prime minister.

"We ramp up when it is necessary and desirable to ramp up, and we relax the regulations when that is also required. So this is just another stage in the process of dealing with Covid-19," the Prime Minister continued.

The St Vincent Electricity Services (VINLEC) has also sent out an advisory stating that all persons entering their offices will be required to wear face masks and that hand sanitising and social distancing practices will continue.

One of the first two individuals with no travel history that tested positive for Covid-19 was revealed to be a VINLEC employee. A circular sent by chief executive officer Thornley Myers on December 29, 2020, advised that one of their employees had been tested positive for the virus that causes Covid-19.

"The employee's last day on the job was Thursday, 24th December 2020. A list of all employees who were in contact with the affected employee was submitted to the Ministry of Health and testing of these employees for the virus has commenced," he wrote in the circular. The employees in contact with this employee were asked to quarantine themselves.

Additionally, two major supermarkets, MASSY Stores (SVG) Ltd, and CK Greaves Supermarket and Company Ltd, have issued a joint public notice stating that from Saturday, January 2, 2021, some new Covid-19 measures will take effect.

The wearing of masks will be mandatory, all users of the compound will be required to wash their hands or sanitize upon entry, and customers will be required to maintain a safe distance of three feet away from one another while shopping and at cash registers.

"These measures are deemed necessary in an effort to ensure the continued safety of our valued team members, customers and other users of our compound," the notice informs.

SVG has now recorded 133 cases of COVID-19. One hundred have recovered and 33 are active.

LET US DO OUR PART AND SAVE OUR BELOVED HOMELAND