

STATEMENT BY
THE HONOURABLE DEPUTY GOVERNOR ON
ARRANGEMENTS AND SAFETY MEASURES FOR PERSONS QUARANTINING AT RESIDENCE OR IN
GOVERNMENT-RUN FACILITIES
1ST MEETING OF THE 2020-2021 SESSION OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS PARLIAMENT-COMMENCED 4TH
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Mister Speaker, in the fight to protect our citizens and residents from the global of COVID-19 pandemic, the Cayman Islands Government has achieved what few other countries around the world have been able to do: to contain the virus and stop community spread. As a result, here in the Cayman Islands we have created a safe haven, where we have been able to relax many of the restrictions imposed at the start of the pandemic, and life has largely returned to normal for those of us who are blessed to reside in these islands. With continued vigilance, we have remained free from community transmission of the COVID-19 disease, even as we moved from a full closure of our borders in March, 2020 to a phased opening in October, 2020.

Mister Speaker, one of the most important public health measures we have employed to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is a mandatory 14-day quarantine requirement for all incoming travellers. We have retained this mandatory 14-day quarantine period even as we have increased the options for where travellers could quarantine, by introducing a Quarantine at Residence option alongside the options to quarantine at a government-sponsored quarantine facility or in a private quarantine facility.

Mister Speaker, our quarantine requirement is supported by other important safety and preventative measures that include mandatory PCR testing, on-arrival and at end of the quarantine period. In addition, persons approved to quarantine in private residences are required to wear an iMSAFE bracelet, a wearable device with monitoring technology. Mister Speaker, this technology solution provides automatic location monitoring and reporting, giving alerts and notifications to a dedicated Monitoring Team.

Mister Speaker, the technology is backed up with “boots on the ground”-a Mobile Compliance Team that has been established to respond to alerts and potential breaches in the established quarantine conditions. In addition, during the quarantine period, the mobile compliance team conducts random spot checks on persons quarantining at a residence and the call centre also makes contact to check how they are doing. Guidance and information is also provided to assist with unavoidable medical appointments and other important concerns.

Mister Speaker, despite these precautions, the public’s sense of safety and well-being has been shaken in recent times by a small number of confirmed breaches of quarantine, in a private residence as well as, most recently, in a government-sponsored facility. Mister Speaker, it is understandable that the public would expect and, indeed, deserves some reassurance that the measures we have put in place to safeguard the community are sufficient and effective. Through this medium, Mister Speaker, I would like to provide some additional information that I hope will assist in this regard:

1. Mister Speaker, the safeguards we have implemented are robust and have kept us free from community transmission of the COVID-19 virus, but individual travellers must play their part by remaining in isolation for the stipulated period in order to keep the Cayman Islands safe. We continue to appeal to travellers to comply with the quarantine restrictions because, by doing so, they are helping to protect lives. At the same time we give notice that breaches of the COVID-19 regulations will not be tolerated and we will seek to prosecute all confirmed violations. We are hopeful, Mister Speaker, that the fact that any person(s) prosecuted will be liable on conviction to a fine of ten thousand dollars and imprisonment for two years will serve as a strong deterrent. As it relates to the two persons who breached the quarantine requirements and received community service as part of the sentencing, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions is appealing that sentencing.

2. Mister Speaker, it should be noted that the government provides significant security resources at government-sponsored quarantine facilities. For example, prior to the recent quarantine breach, the security arrangements at that facility, were as follows:

- A Security detail is on property 24 hours day.
- Security Officers are stationed on each floor where there are travellers and one Security Officer on the outside of each exit. Approximately eleven Security Officers on the property at all times.
- One RCIPS Officer is on duty at the facility at all times. The RCIPS vehicle is parked in front of the facility.
- Security patrols via patrol vehicle are conducted every 30 minutes.
- Every fifteen minutes there is an interchanging rotation among the Security Officers so there is constant movement.

Mister Speaker, after an assessment of the property and with consideration for the breach, an additional five security officers have been recruited to work on the outside where there are blind spots. This comes at an additional cost of \$25,000 per month.

3. Mister Speaker, it should also be noted that, following a confirmed quarantine breach, the Travel Cayman team convenes an internal investigation to review and strengthen the current processes, and close any gaps in the system that could potentially be exploited. For example, following a breach where it was discovered that a traveller had removed her iMSafe bracelet, an additional checkpoint was implemented at the airport to confirm that the bracelet has been fitted correctly, to mitigate against tampering.

4. Mister Speaker, while one breach is too many, and puts us all at risk, it should be recognized that the vast majority of travellers do comply with our quarantine conditions. Since 1 October, there have been 6 cases associated with breaches of quarantine, 2 of which have been prosecuted and 4 of which are under investigation. By comparison, during that same period, over 3,500 persons have arrived on Island, and of these, over 2,000 individuals received approval to quarantine at a residence. By far, the vast majority

of these individuals have completed their quarantine without incident. In allowing persons to enter our borders and quarantine at a private residence or at an approved facility, it should be noted that we are not operating a prison. We rely on the good character and good judgement of travellers and of course persons escape even from the most secure prisons.

5. Mister Speaker, we believe that transparency in the reporting of breaches will help to build public confidence in our safeguards and responses. Therefore, our communications team will continue to work to alert the public to any confirmed breaches in a prompt and responsible manner.
6. Mister Speaker, the Mobile Compliance Team is responsible for conducting the vast majority of QAR accommodation inspections and conducting the welfare and compliance checks of persons in quarantine at a private residence. The team is currently made of 18 persons who have been redeployed from CBC and WORC or engaged through the Cayman Islands Regiment. While work is being advanced to increase the staffing complement of the Mobile Compliance Team, given the volume of persons expected to quarantine at a private residence in the coming weeks, supply will not meet demand. As such, the Travel Cayman programme has explored innovative ways of delivering the necessary welfare and compliance services.
7. Mister Speaker, we have been in communication with Hazard Management Cayman Islands (HMCI) to explore the option of engaging the Cayman Islands Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) to conduct welfare and compliance checks of persons who are in quarantine within their respective catchments. I am happy to report that yesterday evening a proposal to engage CERT teams in the work of Travel Cayman was accepted and work has commenced to determine which CERT Teams are able and willing to participate in this programme. As early as this Saturday, teams will start to be on-boarded, and by early next week CERT Teams will be provided with a list of homes, in

their respective CERT catchment, where persons are in quarantine so that they can conduct welfare/compliance checks within their communities. Using these established resources, which are fully trained in disaster management, engages people at the community level in supporting with the delivery of welfare and compliance checks, which not only helps to address the resource needs but also enhances the sense of community and the sustainability of the CERTs.

Mister Speaker, here in the Cayman Islands, the main priority of our government continues to be the safety of our people. The decisive steps taken to date, including our quarantine restrictions, have kept the coronavirus at bay and are helping to protect lives, while the virus still rages everywhere around us. While we are taking every precaution, guided by the science and supported by robust protocols and procedures, the truth is that we rely on travellers, as well as their friends and loved ones, to play their part by remaining in quarantine for the stipulated period, in order to keep the Cayman Islands safe.

I will close, Mister Speaker, by acknowledging and thanking the many individuals from the following groups and agencies who work together to make travel to the Cayman Islands possible and safe for travellers and our community:

- The Programme Board and Programme Management Office for the Phased Opening programme, with particular recognition due to Programme Director, Dr. Tasha Ebanks-Garcia,
- The Department of Public Safety Communications,
- The HSA and the Public Health Department,
- The Mobile Compliance Team made up Customs and Border Control and Regiment Reservists,
- Cayman Airways,
- The Civil Aviation Authority,
- The Computer Services Department,
- The Department of Environmental Health,
- The Facilities Management Department,
- The Ritz-Carlton, Cayman Islands, and
- Government Information Services.

Thank you, Mister Speaker.