

# Relocation Guide Puerto Rico / USVI



Relocation Guide Puerto Rico / USVI,<sup>1</sup> 2023 edition

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<sup>1</sup>Disclaimer: Mention of a commercial product or service does not constitute, and should not be mistaken for, official endorsement or rejection by the US Government or any element thereof.

## **Chapter 1: General Information – Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands**

Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) are U.S. territories; residents are U.S. citizens and travel to the islands does not require a passport, just like domestic travel within the U.S.. Puerto Rico and the USVI are in the Atlantic Time Zone and do not observe Daylight Savings Time. In autumn, the East Coast falls back to one hour behind Puerto Rico. When the East Coast observes Daylight Savings Time, they are the same time as Puerto Rico.

### **Preparing to Transfer**

#### **Entry Approval Process**

All members transferring overseas must go through the overseas screening process. It is very important to start this process as soon as possible. As part of the overseas screening process your departing command will conduct an interview to ensure your suitability for overseas transfer, as well as that of your dependents. Ensure DEERS information is current for all of your dependents. The checklist can be found (CAC required) at: [Base San Juan Personnel Support Department - BSJ Overseas Screening Checklist PCS2023 V4.pdf - All Documents \(sharepoint-mil.us\)](#)

#### **Sponsor Program**

After you receive orders in Direct Access, your new command will assign a sponsor to you and your dependents. Your sponsor will help you and your family by providing information about your unit, housing options and requirements, and travel tips for success. Do not hesitate to call, text, or email your sponsor with questions about coming to PR or the USVI. A solid relationship and regular communication with your sponsor will help prepare you to travel to the islands and will alleviate stress and uncertainty during your PCS.

#### **Government Travel Charge Card (GTCC)**

Every member should have a government charge card prior to departing for Puerto Rico and the USVI. If you do not have a government travel charge card, see your government travel charge card coordinator to complete the application process. If you are unable to get a GTCC before you depart, ask your Personnel & Admin (P&A) Yeoman (YN) to amend your orders so your flights can be charged to the centrally billed account (CBA) to keep your out-of-pocket expenses as low as possible.

GTCC rules for outside of the continental United States (OCONUS) PCS are different from INCONUS PCS and are subject to change. Prior to departure, verify with your GTCC Coordinator that you can use your GTCC for food and hotel expenses while receiving TLA.

#### **Temporary Lodging Allowance (TLA)**

TLA is a travel entitlement that covers the cost of lodging and meals while waiting for quarters, arranging for housing on the economy, or waiting for HHG delivery. It does not cover parking, rental cars, or pet fees. Lodging facilities with kitchens may alter the reimbursement for TLA. Members reporting to San Juan may be authorized up to 60 days

of TLA (or longer if moving into Coast Guard Housing and your Household Goods have not arrived).

TLA claims must be filed with your servicing YN at Base San Juan Puerto Rico every 10 days. Members must have itemized hotel receipts; meal receipts are not necessary as the Meals & Incidental Expenses part of TLA is a fixed amount, not based on actual expenses. It can take up to a month to receive the funds. You cannot receive Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA) and TLA at the same time. TLA stops the day OHA starts or when you occupy government quarters.

TLA rates are based on per diem rates and the number of dependents. NOTE: Single Active Duty Members or Unaccompanied Active Duty Members only receive 65% of (Temporary Lodging Allowance) TLA. You can find per diem rates at: [www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/perdiemCalc.cfm](http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/perdiemCalc.cfm) and TLA computations at [www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Docs/perdiem/Computing\\_TLA.pdf](http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Docs/perdiem/Computing_TLA.pdf).

### **Lodging Tax Exemption**

You may request the hotel's lodging tax be waived while traveling on official government business (to include members on TLA). You are not required to submit this request but doing so can save the Coast Guard money, and can decrease your daily rate (if it exceeds your TLA). Be aware that not all hotels honor this exemption.

To submit your request, complete the form at: [https://roomtax.prtourism.com/exemption\\_reqs.php?lan=en](https://roomtax.prtourism.com/exemption_reqs.php?lan=en)  
Make sure to include supporting documentation (PCS or travel orders).

Please allow 2-3 working days to process. Provide the waiver approval to the hotel and make sure to keep a copy for yourself. For more information contact the Room Tax Division of the PR Tourism Company at (787) 721-2400 Ext. 3600.

### **Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA)/Utilities Allowance**

OHA is the allowance for reimbursing those living on the economy for housing expenses. It works differently than Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH), the housing allowance paid INCONUS. You will receive payment for the exact cost of your lease up to the maximum amount. If your lease is less, you will not pocket the difference. You will also receive reimbursement for utilities up to the maximum amount.

If you are released from Government Housing and living on the economy, Base Admin will work with you regarding the process. Do not commit to a particular lease or purchase until you fully understand how OHA works. If you have further questions on the differences between OHA and BAH, please contact your corresponding sponsor or YN. For more information on OHA visit <https://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/oha.cfm>

## **Military transfer websites**

<http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/ohaCalc.cfm> OHA Calculator

<http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/colaCalc.cfm> COLA Calculator

<http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/perdiemCalc.cfm> Per Diem/TLA rates

## **Shipping your vehicle**

The USCG will pay shipping expenses for one vehicle. Information for Government funded vehicle shipments and the process is located at [www.pcsmypov.com](http://www.pcsmypov.com). It typically takes five to six weeks for it to arrive after being dropped off CONUS. It may take longer from the West Coast or another overseas location. Read the website closely; the most significant causes of delay is due to failing to follow their instructions.

You may ship additional vehicles to Puerto Rico or the USVI for personal use. You can get an import tax exemption on these vehicles, but you will have to pay to ship it and make your own arrangements. A Google search will identify several shipping options.

Motorcycles can be shipped in HHG.

Contact the Base/Sector San Juan Legal Assistance Attorney at (787) 729-2310, or [Jose.L.Suarez@uscg.mil](mailto:Jose.L.Suarez@uscg.mil) for help with the tax exemption paperwork.

## **Out-of-State License Plates**

You may keep your out-of-state license plates but are required to maintain current vehicle registration from that state. See Chapter 2 for more information.

## **Car Rentals**

Before you rent a vehicle check if your credit card offers car rental insurance (and does not exclude PR or the USVI) or consider purchasing the extra insurance from the rental company. Car rentals can be expensive and TLA does not cover the cost of a rental car unless it is included in the hotel rate.

## **Companion Animals/Pets**

Consider your companion animal/pet's travel requirements during your overseas screening process. Pets do not need to be quarantined when coming to Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands. They can travel by air as cargo, baggage, or in the cabin under the seat for a fee. Each airline has its own requirements regarding pet travel depending on the animals' breed and size. You can find all requirements on the airline's website, and it is advisable to contact them directly early in your research. Most airlines require a clean bill-of-health certificate and an up-to-date rabies shot within 10 days of your flight. Additionally, check the airline's pet carrier requirements.

Certain airlines have a maximum number of pets per flight. It is recommended that you verify there is room for your pet in the cabin or cargo hold of your flight prior to booking. If your pet is flying as cargo, be sure to know how long the airline will hold your pet for you to pick them up.

Some airlines will only transport animals during certain times of day to reduce exposure to high temperatures while waiting to load and unload. If the forecast is too hot in San Juan at the time of arrival, the airline may not fly the pet due to the risk of overheating.

The government does not cover the cost of transporting your pets. Keep your receipt; you may be able to claim the cost on your taxes.

Be sure to research lodging early when bringing animals. If you plan on staying in a hotel until you find more permanent housing, you will have to book early. Some hotels only allow pets in certain rooms and those rooms may be hard to come by. Private rentals may have pet restrictions or may charge an additional pet cleaning fee. Pets are not allowed in the UPH at the Old San Juan Facility or the Borinquen MWR guest housing. However, pets are allowed in the RBH MWR rental homes with an additional pet cleaning fee.

### **Medical**

The TRICARE Overseas Program (TOP), administered by International SOS, is the health care program that provides service to military families in Puerto Rico and the USVI. You must contact them for all your healthcare needs, such as medical advice and information, scheduling appointments and locating network primary and specialty care providers.

Tricare International SOS Customer Service: (877) 451-8659, [www.Tricare-Overseas.com](http://www.Tricare-Overseas.com).

For help transferring to Tricare Overseas or for more information contact the Tricare Beneficiary Service Representative at Base San Juan at (787) 729-2334, Base Detachment Borinquen at (787) 890-8480, or the Tricare Service Center at (877) 451-8659.

Prior to arriving, ensure you and your family members are updated in DEERS and are up-to-date on all medical exams, dental exams, cleanings, immunizations, and prescriptions prior to reporting.

### **Emergency Services**

In Puerto Rico and the USVI, dial 911 if you have an emergency. The service works here just like in the States. Bilingual operators should be available in Puerto Rico.

## **Chapter 2: General Information – Puerto Rico**

Puerto Rico is approximately 100 miles long by 35 miles wide: about the size of Connecticut. It is a vibrant, modern, multicultural society molded by Spanish, African, Indian, and U.S. influences. The trade winds cool the coastal towns and the temperature is lower in the mountains.

### **What is there to do?**

Lots! Base San Juan MWR, <https://sjmwr.com>, and Ft. Buchanan MWR, <https://buchanan.armymwr.com> list a wide variety of activities. Ask your sponsor and other shipmates about their favorite activities. Check out [www.puertoricodaytrips.com](http://www.puertoricodaytrips.com) for a wealth of information on fun activities.

### **Do you have to know Spanish?**

Spanish is the official language of Puerto Rico and most of the written information is in Spanish. However, a large portion of the population speaks both English and Spanish, and usually someone at a business or service speaks English. Newer web browsers and smartphones can be set to automatically translate websites, and various search engines can assist with translating phrases. Living in a Spanish-speaking culture is a great opportunity to learn a language that is becoming more and more prevalent in the U.S. Knowing some basic phrases can help break the ice.

Most civilian employers on PR will require the ability to speak Spanish.

### **Electric Power**

Electricity can be fragile in Puerto Rico. You must protect all electronics with durable surge protectors or uninterruptible power supplies to prevent damage from power surges, lightning strikes to the grid, and/or blackouts and brownouts. Do not underestimate how many common appliances have sensitive electronics in them. Also, keep in mind that cheaper surge protectors may continue to allow power to flow once they have stopped working as a surge protector.

### **Automobile & Driving Information**

#### **Driving**

The culture of driving in PR is different. It may seem like a daunting task at first, but you can drive here safely if you know what to expect.

- Be extra cautious during intense rainstorms since roads tend to flood easily, especially in Old San Juan.
- Slow down if you see “REDUCIR VELOCIDAD,” “LOMO,” or “REDUCTOR DE VELOCIDAD”. These signs mark speed humps.
- Emergency vehicles often have their flashing lights on continuously—you do not need to pull over unless they turn on the siren.



## **Purchasing gas**

Gasoline is sold by the liter, not the gallon. You must pay the cashier before pumping, and most gas stations do not accept payment at the pump.

## **AutoExpreso toll tags**

Information on Puerto Rico's automatic toll system is available at [www.autoexpreso.com](http://www.autoexpreso.com). There is a one-time setup fee of \$10 and a minimum deposit of \$10. You should receive your tag in the mail within 3 days. You can link your tag to a credit card for automatic replenishment or you can purchase and recharge tags at the toll offices, certain toll booths, or by phone, (888) 688-1010.

## **Out-of-State License Plates**

You may keep your out-of-state license plates but are required to maintain current vehicle registration from that state. Those with out-of-state plates must get an ACAA (Agency for the Compensation of Automobile Accidents) sticker, which signifies payment into a state run insurance program similar to No-Fault Personal Injury Protection Insurance INCONUS. ACAA stickers are valid from 1 July to 30 June. You must have an ACAA sticker to pick up a vehicle from the shipping company and to operate your vehicle. You can purchase the sticker at the local tax office (the Hacienda). The closest office to the Old San Juan Facility is located on the "Low Road" in San Juan at The Mercantil Plaza, Ave. Ponce de León, Parada 27½, open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. There are other tax offices around the island that may have a shorter wait. Make sure to take your driver's license, proof of insurance, vehicle registration, military ID and \$35.00 (cash only).<sup>2</sup> Do not wear shorts, tank tops or flip-flops as you will be turned away. (Some find it easiest to conduct business in uniform or business-dress clothing.) Your sponsor should be able to assist you in this process.

Some insurance companies may give you a rebate with proof of purchase of an ACAA sticker. Vehicles registered in PR must have a "Marbete" sticker (instead of an ACAA sticker), which can be purchased at a local bank. In addition to the purchase of the Marbete, you must purchase compulsory insurance with liability coverage if your vehicle is not covered through any other insurance. Marbete stickers must be renewed yearly.

Check with your insurance company to make sure that they will insure you while you are stationed in PR. Popular alternatives here are Seguros Multiples <http://www.seguros multiples.com> and Universal Insurance <http://www.universalpr.com>.

## **Maintenance and Repair**

There are national chains (such as Auto Zone and Pep Boys) as well as local auto parts suppliers and repair shops. Fort Buchanan also has certain auto repair services as well.

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<sup>2</sup> Filling out your ACAA form: 1. Put the VIN in the Registration Number field. 2. "Date" field: for first time purchase, enter the date when the car was or will be available to pick up at the VPC. 3. Leave the Serial Number field as N/A.



### A note about bicycling

Due to road layout, commuting from RBH to the Old San Juan facility by bicycle is difficult and there is no direct route. However, protected bike lanes on the high road and the middle road have improved the safety of commuting from locations closer in to the Old San Juan Facility.

### Living on the Economy

Here are some helpful tips, compiled by members currently living on the economy that may help with your planning and preparation.

- Working with a realtor can be very helpful.
- Check flood/storm surge/tsunami risk maps—for certain scenarios, the USCG or local authorities may require people in certain areas to evacuate.
- Utilities, in general, are not as reliable as they are stateside. In your search, you'll often come across buildings/houses that have back-up generators and cisterns to mitigate those interruptions.
- Electric bills can be quite high. Know which utilities, if any, are included in your rent and discuss the utilities allowance with your Base San Juan YN. If you plan to cool your house via open windows, inspect the screens and security features carefully.

### Postal Mail Information

The U.S. Postal Service (USPS) provides the same services as stateside; ZIP codes are used, not APO/FPO addresses. We recommend you send the USPS Change of Address form a week before you lose access to your old mailbox. It may take 45 days to get your first mail before it comes more regularly. As with any other move, switching important business statements to paperless will increase the speed of delivery.

### Medical

While living in Puerto Rico, military families use Tricare Overseas. During a hospital stay, you will need to provide your own pillows, blankets, etc. Air conditioning in the hospital can be quite cold.

There is a shortage of medical specialists so specialty appointments may take longer to obtain. Tricare standards for appointment time still applies. If you are unable to obtain an appointment within the time allowed by Tricare standards, HSWL offers Travel to Obtain Healthcare, which funds travel to facilitate obtaining care within standards. If you have a dependent who requires regular specialty care contact Base San Juan Medical to discuss their situation.

### Cellular Phone Service

AT&T, T-Mobile, and Sprint are the main U.S. carriers on the island. There are additional local carriers as well. Verizon subscribers receive service through a local provider in a non-roaming status, but there are no stores on island.

## **Chapter 2.1: San Juan**

### **Old San Juan Facility address**

5 Calle La Puntilla  
San Juan, PR 00901

### **Phone Number**

Main Number: (787) 729-6800

### **Emergency Information**

In addition to 911 if you are staying at RBH, call RBH Security at (787)774-0054, if possible, so they can direct EMS to the appropriate unit, or if you have problems with the 911 system.

If you require further assistance, call the Sector Command Center at (787) 289-2041, Base San Juan OOD at (787) 501-6437 and/or Rio Bayamon Housing Watch Stander at (939) 417-8224.

If you go to the emergency room or are admitted to the hospital: active duty must contact the Duty Health Services Technician ((787) 360-1613); dependents may contact the Duty Health Services Technician for advice and assistance.

### **Short-term Lodging**

While you are in search of your new home consider the following options.

#### **Rio Bayamon Housing (RBH) Guest Houses/Gonzalez Hall Guest Rooms**

MWR has 7 four-, three-, and two-bedroom guest houses available for rent at RBH. Pets are accepted in all but the four-bedroom house. Reservations can be made up to three months in advance with orders. Staying in guest housing is a great way to begin connecting with your new Coast Guard community.

Gonzalez Hall in the Unaccompanied Personnel Housing (UPH) complex offers ten guest rooms. You can't beat the commute and the view is beautiful. (Rooms are pet-free.)

<https://sjmwr.com/mwr/guest-stay/>

### **Hotels**

Some hotels have special "Coast Guard rates" and some include a rental car in the hotel rate. Call the hotel to ask about these rates and any additional fees such as resort, parking, and pet fees. TLA will cover resort fees, but not pet or parking fees, as long as the total is less than the total TLA allowance. Not all hotels have on-site laundry, but members on TLA are authorized to use the laundry facilities at UPH; contact UPH staff for more information.

MWR also has information about hotels with special rates.

For temporary pet boarding, there are several pet hotels and doggie day camps on the island.

## **Housing Options**

### **Rio Bayamon Housing (RBH)**

As of 2013, assignment to Coast Guard government housing is mandatory unless approved to live on the economy. RBH is located on 37.5 acres of CG-owned land in Bayamon, PR. There are 149 housing units, constructed in 1997. Each housing unit is equipped with energy-efficient central A/C, electric range with vented hood, 80-gallon water heater or equivalent tankless system, refrigerator, dishwasher, garbage disposal, washer and electric dryer hook-ups, carport, screened patio, and cable-ready access in the majority of the rooms. Cable TV and Internet service needs to be set up by the resident, if desired, through local service providers. RBH is guarded 24 hours a day with security rounds to ensure the safety and well-being of our community. Amenities include a pool, basketball, volleyball, and tennis courts. The community center includes a weight room, a spinning room, a small library, on-site maintenance staff plus self-help options. We also have a few playgrounds, a Child Development Center, and a dog park. (RBH allows two pets with an additional pet cleaning fee. It is possible to get a waiver if you have more than two pets.) Free WiFi is provided at the community center and pool.

The pool at RBH is for all CG members and their families, open daily.

In addition to the fitness gym in the community center, there is a 1-mile paved trail around housing which many residents walk/run/bike for exercise. Remember that CG members and dependents can also use the gym facility at Fort Buchanan.

Check-in with MWR to receive information about accessing the gym, pool, etc. MWR also offers equipment rental of various recreational equipment. For more information contact MWR at (787) 774- 0298, option 4, visit their website at [www.sjmwr.com](http://www.sjmwr.com) or CG Portal page.

### **RBH Postal mail information**

If you are required to provide the urbanization code when changing your mailing address, use Comunidad Rio Bayamon. Once you are assigned a unit at RBH, change your address to:

500 Carr. 177 Box Z9-99 (replace Z9 with unit letter and # and replace 99 with box #)  
Bayamon, PR 00959 <sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> This address will work for all mail and parcels. USPS won't reference the APT/Unit number, so mail addressed only to B1, C1, D1, etc. may go to Box 1). Parcels which won't fit in the box, or are delivered by other than USPS, won't reference the box number. You may use this ZIP code regardless of whether your house is technically in Guaynabo or Bayamon.

The Housing Office will inform you of your box number. All mail received at the local Post Office is sorted by box number, not house number. Some senders do not ship to a PO Box address. You can assure them the delivery address is not a PO Box, or omit the box number for those shippers. As the first piece of mail from each sender arrives, check it to ensure it has your correct address. USPS, UPS, and FEDEX deliver parcels to your door at RBH.

For more information about RBH, please see the [Base SJ RBH Resident Handbook](#) and the [Housing Application Form](#) on the [Housing CG Portal site](#).

### **Unaccompanied Personnel Housing (UPH)**

Occupying Coast Guard government housing is mandatory for unaccompanied personnel if there is a vacancy. Typically, supply and demand is such that non-rates and junior Petty Officers are not released from government housing on arrival. However, any member may choose to live in the UPH, and several Officers and Chiefs choose to do so. Geo-bachelors may also obtain a room in UPH, if not assigned to an afloat unit. Contact the UPH staff for the latest information.

For Old San Juan Facility and RBH vehicle policies visit the [CSO's CG Portal site](#).

### **Living on the Economy**

The Base San Juan is located in Old San Juan, one of the premier destinations in Puerto Rico and a very popular tourist area for travelers and locals alike. Although housing is mandatory, there are more CG families assigned to San Juan than CG family housing units and UPH rooms. Therefore, some families will be released to live on the economy. Make sure to secure your release from government quarters before signing a lease on the economy.

Apartments in Old San Juan, Condado, and Isla Verde are typically offered as furnished units than unfurnished. You may want to consider non-temporary storage (at government expense if you choose before shipping from CONUS) for the bulk of your furniture/HHG to open up more housing possibilities without the need to pay for storage inPR.

### **Getting plugged in to the CG community**

You can request access to CGPR Community, a closed group on Facebook for CG members and dependents assigned to Puerto Rico. There is also a moderated email group that functions like a list server (ask your sponsor). Both are run by volunteers and are not official command entities. However, they are a great resource for incoming members to ask questions, receive information updates and learn about upcoming events.

### **Spouses' Club**

The Spouses' Club located in San Juan would like to extend you a very warm welcome to Puerto Rico. The Spouses' Club is open to all USCG active duty spouses and usually meets once monthly. The club plans various community activities such as community clean-ups, wine tasting, holiday events & charitable functions. We encourage everyone to get involved

and play an active part in making our community a great place to live. The Spouses' Club welcomes spouses from the Ponce area to join as well.

### **Education and Child Care Services**

Schools in Puerto Rico require children to have a current physical exam, a Tuberculosis test and the Hepatitis A immunization. Getting all necessary immunizations and the physical exam form completed prior to your arrival in Puerto Rico is recommended.

### **DoDEA Schools at Fort Buchanan**

Fort Buchanan schools are approximately five miles from RBH, offering grades Pre-K through 12. Bus transportation is provided to and from RBH, as well as many other locations for those who may be living on the economy. Students wear a school uniform, which can be purchased at the Uniforms Outlet in San Juan. For information regarding eligibility, registration, immunizations, etc. visit <https://www.dodea.edu/registration-process.cfm>.

#### **[Antilles Elementary School \(Grades Pre-K-5\)](#)**

Main Office Numbers: (787) 707-2364

For new students, the overseas screening physical (complete with the doctor's signature) may be accepted in lieu of the school registration physical if it has been completed in the last six months.

#### **[Antilles Middle School \(Grades 6-8\)](#)**

Main Office Number: (787) 707-2461

Please check their website for Summer Reading Programs prior to starting school.

#### **[Antilles High School \(Grades 9-12\)](#)**

Main Office Number: (787) 707-2301

For new students, the overseas screening physical (complete with the doctor's signature) may be accepted in lieu of the school registration physical if it has been completed in the last six months.

A sports physical exam is required if your child will play sports at the middle school or high school level. The sports physical form can be found at

[www.dodea.edu/StudentServices/Health/healthForms.cfm](http://www.dodea.edu/StudentServices/Health/healthForms.cfm) under miscellaneous forms.

Note the overseas screening physical cannot take the place of a sports physical.

For additional information about public schools, private schools, or home schooling, please inquire with your sponsor.

## **Child Care Services**

The USCG Child Development Center (CDC) is located in RBH and available to all Coast Guard personnel regardless of where you reside. It is open weekdays for childcare: full-time, part-time, and hourly, as available. The after-school program is for children who arrive on the bus before their parents get home. For more information contact the CDC at (787) 774-0468, visit their webpage at <https://sjmwr.com/mwr/cdc> or CG Portal page.

## **Medical**

The Coast Guard clinic in the Old San Juan Facility is for active-duty service members only. Family members may use the Rodriguez Army Health Clinic at Fort Buchanan or go to the Salus medical clinic in Guaynabo (close to RBH).

The Rodriguez Army Health Clinic provides routine and urgent medical care for active-duty service members and their family members over 5 years of age. You may assign the clinic as PCM for those eligible dependents. The clinic is open Monday through Wednesday and Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Thursday from 7:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.. English is the clinic's primary language.

Information line: (787) 707-4392; Appointment line: (787) 707-4393;  
[www.rahc.amedd.army.mil](http://www.rahc.amedd.army.mil).

Salus Medical Clinic is a premier non-military clinic on the island and is a member of the Mayo Clinic Care Network. Aside from primary care doctors, the clinic offers many specialties including pediatricians, dermatologists, OB-GYNs, cardiologists, optometrists, mental health care providers, and even pediatric/adult dentistry. As with all Tricare Prime networks, you must see a primary care doctor before you can see a specialist. Usually the Coast Guard Clinic will submit the referral request and all you have to do is call to make the appointment once the referral is approved. The website is [www.saluspr.com/en](http://www.saluspr.com/en).

There are six hospital emergency rooms near Coast Guard housing: Hima-San Pablo (adult and separate pediatric ER), Hospital Hermanos Melendez, Hospital Metropolitano, Veterans Hospital (only for active duty and eligible veterans), Ashford-Presbyterian Hospital in Condado, and Centro Medico in Rio Piedras.

## **Area Familiarization**

### **Old San Juan**

Old San Juan is the oldest settlement within Puerto Rico and has been declared a National Historic Landmark District. Throughout the year many festivals and events draw hundreds of thousands of visitors. Here you'll find furnished and unfurnished apartments and condominium units, and the Old San Juan Facility is located within walking distance of anywhere in Old San Juan.

## **Condado**

Condado is about three miles east of Old San Juan, and has a Miami Beach-type atmosphere with upscale restaurants, bars, and designer boutiques. There are several waterfront parks with beach access. In Condado, you'll primarily find apartment and condominium rentals with a limited number of stand-alone homes. A bus runs regularly between Condado and Old San Juan and some members commute via bicycle.

## **Isla Verde**

Isla Verde is about eight miles east of Old San Juan and has one of the best beaches in all of the Caribbean. Like Condado, you will primarily find apartments and condominiums.

## **Additional Information**

### **Coast Guard Exchange**

The CG Exchange at the Old San Juan Facility has items including food, clothing, uniforms, sporting goods, kitchen items, propane, and electronics, and can place special orders.

### **Fort Buchanan**

Fort Buchanan is an Army installation located approximately 15 minutes from housing. There are two gates: the [north gate](#)<sup>4</sup> is simplest to navigate to and closest to the commissary and gas station. The east, or main gate, is near the Welcome Center and golf course. Here is a list of services available at Fort Buchanan.

- Welcome center: ID/CAC card processing, DEERS updates (appointments required, call 787.707.3938 or [schedule online](#)<sup>5</sup>). Tricare and the Personal Property Shipping Office are also located here.
- Exchange: Also a food court, barber shop, beauty salon, optometrist, car rentals, and many kiosks. A car dealership is located outside. Items ordered through the Army-Air Force Exchange web page have a free delivery option to the Fort Buchanan exchange.
- Commissary: Closed on Mondays. Adults without military or dependent ID are not allowed at any time.
- Express/Class Six: Home furnishings, sporting/camping goods, toys, lawn/garden, propane, and alcohol products.
- Golf course: Kids 12 and under golf free!
- Bowling alley

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<sup>4</sup> The GPS coordinates for the north gate are N 18°25.086' W066°07.569'. If someone refers to the Main Gate, ask whether they mean the north or east gate.

<sup>5</sup> See also <https://cgportal2.uscg.mil/units/sectorsanjuan/logs/SPO/ID%20Cards/Forms/AllItems.aspx> for information on what to bring and how to find this and other DEERS sites.



- Gas station: Lists prices by the gallon and is one of few places in PR where you can pay at the pump with a credit card. Offers oil changes and tires for purchase with a lifetime guarantee. The air pump for tires is free.
- Library: A great resource for adult and children's books, music, weekly story time, borrow movies (DVD and VHS), closed Sundays.
- Veterinary clinic: Open Tuesday through Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., 787.707.2038
- Rodriguez Army Health Clinic
- Educational and Developmental Intervention Services (EDIS): Free service for families who have questions/concerns about their child's development (from birth to 36 months of age).
- Post chapel: Offers Protestant and Catholic services in English. (787) 564-2014/ (787) 598-7583
- [Automotive skills center](#): Certified emissions testing facility, flat tires, air conditioning, brakes, etc. plus recommendations on locating specialty services; towing service; 787.707.3972. This location has trained mechanics on site that can provide advice and loan tools for self-help projects.
- [Waterspout](#): Splash pad/water park. Military family membership is available.
- [Physical fitness center](#): Full gym, ball courts, group exercises classes, indoor cycling, etc. Can also be a resource for getting a shower when it is not practical to get back to your hotel. One-time registration required.
- Child Development Center and School Age Care Center
- Lending Closet: Lends household item "packages" to hold you over until your household goods arrive. Furniture may be available. Call (787) 707-3697 or (787) 707-3682 for availability.

For more information and to see what is going on at Fort Buchanan check out [www.buchanan.army.mil](http://www.buchanan.army.mil) and [www.buchananmwr.com](http://www.buchananmwr.com).

## Chapter 2.2: Ponce

### **Unit Address:**

RIO Ponce has been temporarily relocated while its facilities are being rebuilt. Contact the RIO Ponce Supervisor for details.

### **Phone Number:**

RIO Ponce Supervisor: (760) 201-7309

### **Preparing for Transfer**

#### **Travel Plans**

Confer with your sponsor to determine the best airport to fly into. Mercedita Airport is located in Ponce, but Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport in San Juan will afford you more options.

### **Housing Options:**

#### **Living on the economy**

No government housing is available in the Ponce area. If you want to live within a 30 minute drive to Ponce, check out houses on the outskirts of Ponce, Coto Laurel, or Juana Diaz. If you prefer the beach life and don't mind a longer commute, check out the west side of the island near Cabo Rojo.

### **Education and Child Care Services**

#### **The Caribbean School**

<http://www.caribbeanschool.org>

The Caribbean School is the only accredited English language school recognized by the Department of Defense (DoD) in Southern Puerto Rico. DoD will pay the tuition, fees, and mileage for active duty dependents 4 years of age and older. The Caribbean School offers:

- A written curriculum for grades Pre-K through 12
- A computer instruction facility with two laboratories (25 computers each)
- Library facilities with increased teaching and research space
- State of the art science facilities with four up-to-date laboratories
- Smart boards in the classrooms
- The finest school sports pavilions in southern Puerto Rico
- Spanish learning class

The DoD contact for this area is Ms. Pam Pagan, (787) 707-4621, [Pam.Pagan@am.dodea.edu](mailto:Pam.Pagan@am.dodea.edu).

### **Medical**

Military personnel go to Sector San Juan for all medical and dental primary care and referrals. Dependents will receive a local PCM through the Tricare representative

## **Chapter 2.3: Air Station & Base Detachment Borinquen**

Air Station and Base DET Borinquen are located on the west side of the island, known for its beautiful beaches, relaxed beach community, and world renown surfing competitions. Base San Juan SPO is the entry point for base detachment and air station personnel

### **Unit Mailing Address**

USCG Air Station or Base DET Borinquen  
Attn: "Department XXXX"  
260 Guard Road  
Aguadilla, PR 00603

### **Phone Number**

Main: (787) 890-8400

### **Emergency Information:**

In addition to 911 if you require further assistance, contact Air Station security at (787) 890-8472 or (787) 890-COP1 (2671) for emergencies. Security is located on the corner of Northeast Road and Wing Road. The office is open Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

If the condition is not life threatening, call the Duty HS: (787) 221-0015. If it is life threatening, go to the nearest ER.

### **Housing**

Check out the Base Detachment Borinquen housing manual for pertinent rules and guidelines. <https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/units/dol/dol-3/BSJ/BDB/BQNHousing/Shared Documents/BDBQNINST 11101.1A - Coast Guard Base Detachment Local Housing Policy.pdf>

Trash pick-up is Tuesday morning and recycling is picked up every other Tuesday. The dog park is located in the center of the base on Circle F. You must register your pets with security. Please be sure to pick up after your pet and keep your dog on a leash walking aroundbase.

### **Gates**

The Coast Guard Housing Area has two gates. Housing residents may use the Main Gate, located at the end of Wing Road just past Fifth Street.

Security has the combination to the gate that overlooks the cliff (near Cliff Road and 6th Street) to Survival Beach. The combination changes periodically and is NOT to be shared. There is also a pedestrian gate at the south end of Northeast Road whose code is also maintained by the Security office and changes periodically.

There is a nice trail down to the beach. Please make sure you lock gate behind you, to and from the trail. This trail can be a bit tough for really young children. Babies are best in backpacks or carriers that allow you to have use of both hands. Use caution when swimming at Survival Beach due to strong currents and limited access and cell phone reception.

### **Education and Child Care Services:**

#### **Ramey School**

[www.dodea.edu/Ramey](http://www.dodea.edu/Ramey)

201 Arch Road, Aguadilla, PR 00603

(787) 890-4145

Principal: Mr. James Strait

Ramey School is a Pre-K to 12th grade school administered by the Department of Defense. Registration is typically the last week of July and school starts mid-August. Contact the school for more information regarding vaccinations, physicals and registration requirements. The PTSO will usually have a used uniform sale sometime during the summer. You can find information online about procedures, school calendar, and much more.

#### **Medical**

Many medical offices on the western side of the island do not take appointments. They see patients on a first come, first serve basis. You may be given an appointment time, but you might easily wait over two hours to be seen. The best thing to do is “schedule” an appointment early on a day you are not in a rush and bring something to occupy your time (snacks, book, phone charger, etc.). Many doctors’ offices tend to be very cold, so take a sweater or light jacket to stay warm. You may request an interpreter to go with you by calling the base OOD.

Your Ombudsman has access to additional information about doctors, vaccines and more.

#### **Base Detachment Borinquen Clinic**

118 Northeast Road

For Appointments: (787) 890- 8477

Clinic hours: Monday – Friday 7:30 p.m. – 12:00 p.m., 1:00 – 3:30 p.m. (Closed Wednesday afternoon for training)

The clinic offers routine care to Active Duty residents and their dependents. The clinic pharmacy offers over-the-counter medications for free, such as sunscreen, children’s acetaminophen, bug spray and ibuprofen. Limited to two items per week/per family.

#### **Tricare Service Center (TSC)**

Located at Air Station Borinquen Clinic

Tricare Representative: Eric Gerena (787) 890-8480, [Eric.Gerena@uscg.mil](mailto:Eric.Gerena@uscg.mil)

Tricare Service Center: (877) 451-8659

Office Hours: Monday – Friday 7:30 a.m. – 12:00, 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. (Closed Wednesdays)

## **Animal Services**

### **Clínica Veterinaria San Francisco De Asís**

Carr. 2, Km 82.7, Hatillo, PR 00659

(787) 879-5251 / (787) 817-0149

Regular Hours: Monday – Saturday 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Emergency Hours: Everyday 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 a.m.

This is the closest and only emergency veterinarian clinic nearby.

### **The Pet Vet**

PR-4466, Km 0.3, BO Bajuras, Isabela, PR 00662

(787) 872-0204 4466

Hours vary.

Directions: Heading east on Rt. 110, turn left down the hill at the blinking light. The clinic will be on the left hand side about a mile out, past the sharp turn. It has a blue sign.

### **Veterinary Clinic**

Building 676 in the Air Station

(787) 707-2038

Hours: Monday and Wednesday 8:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., Thursday 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

\*Pay by cash or check.

## **Getting plugged in the CG community**

### **Community Resources**

Sign up for the Borinquen Beacon newsletter, our base website and email. Sign up to receive the Beacon by emailing the editor at [mwrbynpr@gmail.com](mailto:mwrbynpr@gmail.com). The Beacon is a vital information resource for current base events. The Beacon can be found on line at <http://www.BorinquenBeacon.com>. Read your Beacon – It's fun!

### **Local Facebook Groups:**

[The Community at Air Station Borinquen](#)

[USCG Air Station Borinquen All Spouses' Club](#)

[PR WESTenders](#)

[Ramey Base SWAP N' SHOP](#)

[Borinquen Chapel Fellowship](#)

[Borinquen Fit Kids Club](#)

[Aguadilla Yoga](#)

*La Isla Reader* is a local magazine available at many restaurants and surf shops for free. This magazine has great up-to-date information on local events, restaurants, and activities in both English and Spanish.

*Qué Pasa Magazine* has island information as well.

## **Morale Well-Being and Recreation (MWR)**

131 Cliff Road

Hours: Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

### **MWR-coordinated activities:**

Adult Pick-Up Sports: Soccer, basketball, softball, flag football and tennis.

Captain's Cup Sports: Softball, futsal, basketball, and volleyball. MWR will advertise for participants and schedule events.

Youth Sports: Soccer, basketball and baseball. Watch the Beacon for information on registration.

Ceramic Shop: Located at 195B Wing Road. The Ceramic Shop schedule is posted weekly in the Beacon and on the MWR USCG Air Station Borinquen Facebook page. Contact MWR for information.

Community Center: Features an American Pub style menu. Open for dinner on Thursdays, 5:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. Open for parties, special events, and community gatherings. The fitness center is also located here.

Daycare: Offered at the Child Development Center (CDC) from Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Summer and holiday hours vary (closed on the weekends). You must register your children with the CDC to use their services.

Boys & Girls Club: Located at 107 Northeast Road. The Boys & Girls Club offers an affordable after-school program until 6:00 p.m. They also offer summer camp opportunities. Watch the Beacon for details.

Library: Located at 111 Northeast Road. Hours are irregular so check the *Beacon* for posted hours. There is free Wi-Fi outside the library.

Pool: The pool is a great place to relax, cool off and meet some new friends. You must purchase an annual membership through MWR or pay a small daily fee.

Non-summer hours: Monday – Friday 11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Summer hours: Monday – Friday 12:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday 11:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Lap swim hours: Tuesday and Thursday 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Red Cross swimming lessons are available for both adults and children.

## **Religious Program**

### **Chapel**

The Chapel is located at La Plaza, 2<sup>nd</sup> Deck, Room 205. A Christian Protestant service is offered on Sundays at 10:00 a.m. All are welcome. There are also numerous programs available through the Chapel for personal spiritual growth including Bible studies,

children's church and a teen program. For other faith services please contact the Chapel office for information.

The Air Station Command Chaplain is available for confidential counseling by appointment. You can reach him at (787) 890-8486 or on the duty phone at (787) 397-1068.

### **The Borinquen Youth Group**

A non-denominational group that seeks to build a community of 7th-12th graders who will grow together in the Lord through fun, worship, and honest, challenging, and heartfelt conversations in a respectful environment. All 7th-12th graders can participate, no matter their home church. The group meets on Wednesday from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. Dinner is served.

### **Additional Information**

#### **Coast Guard Exchange**

Store phone number: (787) 890-7272

Store hours: Monday – Saturday 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m., Sunday 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Gas station hours: Monday – Saturday 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m., Sunday 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

The Coast Guard Exchange may close or have reduced hours on holidays.

The Coast Guard Exchange offers the following services:

- Special Orders
- Layaway
- Price matching
- Money orders
- STAR card payments
- Postage stamps
- Sign up to receive the latest store advertisements and view current job opportunities at [shopcgx.com](http://shopcgx.com).



## **Chapter 3: General Information – USVI**

### **Driving**

Motorists drive on the LEFT side of the road in the USVI. It can create some unusual traffic patterns/intersections and may take some time to get used to. Just remember KEEP LEFT!

### **Prepare to Transfer**

#### **Short-term Lodging**

Upon your arrival to St. Thomas or St. Croix, you will most likely stay at a hotel while searching for housing. You may want to rent a car depending on when your personal vehicle arrives. The cost of the rental car is not covered by the Coast Guard. If your insurance, bank, credit card, or rewards program offers a discount on rental cars, book through their website as the rental companies here often do not accept the discount over the phone or in person.

Be sure to ask for the military rate when booking your hotel room. NOTE: Single Active Duty Members or Unaccompanied Active Duty Members only receive 65% of (Temporary Lodging Allowance) TLA.

### **Automobile & Driving Information**

There is limited public transportation available on island so it is strongly recommended you ship your POV well ahead of your arrival (recommend 30-45 days). It also is NOT a good idea to bring new vehicles to the island. Roads are very rough and filled with potholes. 4X4 vehicles such as jeeps are the preferred vehicle on islands and you may be able to sell it profitably upon departure. If you do not plan to ship a vehicle, there are always vehicles on island that can be purchased at decent prices.

The culture of driving in St. Thomas is different. Remember to drive defensively at all times, look around and understand that people are going to pull out in front of you and stop in the middle of the road to chat with their friends.

### **Purchasing gas**

Gas is a bit more expensive and there are very few pay at the pump options. Gas stations will take credit cards, but you will need to pay at the register.

### **Out-of-State License Plates**

You may keep out-of-state license plates as long as you maintain current registration from that state. Local laws require most people to obtain local license plates and driver's licenses on arrival. Military members are exempt from this requirement, but we are sometimes pulled over and questioned about our out-of-state plates. It is recommended to carry a copy of your orders and the local law in your vehicle.

## **Insurance**

Verify your insurance company will insure you while you are stationed in the USVI. It is highly recommended you carry enough insurance in the event of a total loss and that your vehicle and personal belongings are fully covered for hurricane and flood damage.

## **Housing Options**

There is no government housing in St. Thomas or St. Croix. Members will receive an Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA), Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) and a utility allowance. OHA works differently than Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) so research your OHA entitlement before searching for a place to live. Look up your housing and utility allowances at <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/ohaCalc.cfm> or contact Base San Juan's ADMIN office to help you through your authorized entitlements.

Financial pre-planning is essential when you are coming to the USVI. It may cost an estimated \$7,000 - \$10,000 to establish a rental property on island. ALL landlords require a security deposit along with the first and last month's rent. When you do your financial screening make sure you take into account that certain entitlements can change such as COLA and utilities allowances. You may need to request advance pay or a CG Mutual Assistance loan prior to leaving your current unit.

## **Household Goods**

Unfurnished housing is VERY RARE. Most rental properties are completely furnished. This can affect how much of your personal belongings to bring. Be selective on what you bring with you. Additionally, most units are not air-conditioned, meaning your furniture, artwork and other items may be exposed to salt air and mold. Most people decide to leave their more expensive and fragile items in storage to avoid damage caused by the salt air. Check with your ADMIN YN to discuss long term storage options for the bulk of your household goods. You will still be allowed an Express Baggage shipment (clothes, electronics, dishes, etc.).

It is a good idea to bring recreational items or items that are difficult to obtain once you are here. If you really plan to take advantage of the island you may want to consider purchasing items such as paddle boards, kayaks, or scuba gear and shipping them with your household goods. Those items are extremely expensive in the USVI due to the shipping costs. Feel free to contact any member of the unit and ask their opinion regarding this matter. We want you to enjoy your time here!

## **Electric power and water**

The cost of electricity can be quite high. Most homes have single-room air conditioning units instead of central air. Running the air conditioning all day will be extremely costly.

Most homes run off a cistern and septic tank systems. Rainwater is collected in a tank below the house to be used throughout the house. Do not drink the water from the cistern; however, it is safe to use for bathing and washing dishes.

### **Postal Mail Information**

Most residences here do NOT receive mail delivery. You can rent a PO Box but most members forward their mail to their unit.

When shipping items, it is easiest and the least expensive to use the US Postal Service (USPS) Flat Rate envelopes and boxes which ship anything that fits for one low rate anywhere in the United States.

Fed-Ex, UPS, and DHL are available but do not deliver to all addresses and may require you to go to the carrier's office to pick up your package(s). Additionally, the USVI is considered International for these carriers and rates can be more expensive than USPS Flat Rate.

Some vendors will not ship to the USVI or they charge international fees. If you are unable to having something shipped to you or the shipping costs are too high, an option is to ship the package to a family member in the states, and have them ship it to you in a USPS Flat Rate box. We have found this is one of the cheapest solutions.

### **Medical**

Military personnel and dependents go to private sector doctors for all medical and dental care, and referrals. However, medical facilities in the USVI are somewhat limited. For highly specialized care, you may be referred to medical providers in Puerto Rico or the mainland United States. This will be handled through Tricare and Base Puerto Rico. It is important to bring up any special medical concerns during the overseas screening process.

## Chapter 3.1: St. Thomas

### **Unit Mailing Address**

3300 Veterans Drive  
St. Thomas, VI 00802

### **Phone Number**

Main: (340) 776-3497

### **Emergency Information**

In addition to 911 if you require further assistance, call the Sector San Juan Command Center at (787) 289-2041, MSD St. Thomas duty phone at (340) 201-8593 or BFD St. Thomas duty phone at (340) 227-0894.

If you are admitted to the hospital, contact the MSD Supervisor at (340) 201-1596 or BFD Supervisor (340) 201-2851.

### **Preparing to Transfer**

The Cyril E. King International Airport services St. Thomas. Ensure you bring an adequate amount of cash with you. There are ATMs here; however, they are not readily available. Scotia Bank is located here and does not charge Bank of America customers for ATM use. Other local banks include Banco Popular and 1<sup>st</sup> Bank.

### **Housing Options**

No government housing is available in the St. Thomas. It is recommended you have a realtor show you around. The use of a realtor can dramatically facilitate locating a place to live. When relocating to St. Thomas you can see almost every place available in a handful of days. It is normal to spend the full TLA period in a hotel waiting for something to come available.

### **Vehicle Shipment**

Personnel currently stationed at St. Thomas can retrieve your vehicle for you and have it waiting for you upon your arrival if you provide a power of attorney and other necessary official documentation.

### **Education Services and Child Care Services**

For information regarding public schools in St. Thomas visit the Virgin Islands Department of Education website at <https://www.vide.vi>.

There are also several private schools on island and stipends are available to help assist with tuition. You will request the assistance via your chain of command. You can find more information on the VI Department of Education website, <http://www.vide.vi>.

## **Area Familiarization**

### **Towns/Beaches**

It is important to become familiar with the island, as this will be your new home for the next few years. St. Thomas offers world-class beaches where you can enjoy the sun, water sports, and the island's beautiful surroundings/culture. Here is a list of some towns to visit and must-see beaches.

Bolongo/Bolongo Bay: Home of the world-famous Iggy's Beach Bar. Recommended if you want play some volleyball and listen to a live band.

Charlotte Amalie: The waterfront by the CG base has a variety of shops and restaurants. Stick to the two blocks closest to the water.

Havensight: The cruise ship docks have some souvenir shops and places to eat and drink.

Hawksnest Bay: Swim with turtles.

Hull Bay: A northside favorite. Recommended if you are looking to find some surf.

Magens Bay: 1.5 miles of pure white sand with lounge chair rentals and a snack bar. Recommended if you just want to get your tan on.

Morningstar: Located below the Marriott. This beach has a high class tapas bar and often features a live DJ in the afternoons. Recommended if you miss South Beach.

Red Hook: The place to go in the evenings. Plenty of bars, restaurants, and souvenir shops.

Tutu: The island's mall is located here with stores such as K-Mart, Office Max, Radio Shack, and Walgreens.

Secret Harbor: Tucked away on the south shore. Recommended if you are looking to get away.

Yacht Haven Grande: Around the bay from the base. Boutique stores and some fine dining options.

### **St. John Island**

St. John is the neighboring island you can visit by chartered catamaran, taking a ferry from Red Hook, or on your personal vessel. The ferry runs every hour from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. between Red Hook in St. Thomas and Cruz Bay in St. John. St. John is home to the Virgin Islands National Park and the finest beaches in the Virgin Islands.

Cinnamon Bay: Perfect for sunbathing.

Trunk Bay: Snorkel the guided underwater tour.

Maho: Paddleboarding in paradise.

## **Additional Information**

### **Internet Providers and Cable**

The main internet providers are VIYA and Broadband VI. VIYA provides faster speeds but runs via wire that can pose problems during storms. Broadband VI works via line of sight microwave and can easily be reestablished post storms.

Cable is available through VIYA, Dish Network and Sling TV (internet TV). Your location on the island will determine the best service provider. Premium services typically average about \$100/month for internet and an additional \$40-50 for cable or satellite. Sling TV is app based and will work if you have WIFI.

### **Cell Phone Service**

The only reliable cell phone company in St. Thomas is AT&T. Other services may work, but have significant issues with dead zones, data non-availability, and customer service.

## **Chapter 3.2: St. Croix**

### **Unit Mailing Address**

5090 Estate Solitude  
Christiansted, USVI 00820

### **Phone Numbers**

Main: (340) 772-5557  
RIO Duty: (340) 201-4099  
RIO Supervisor: (340) 227-4412  
BFD Duty: (340) 227-0916  
BFD Supervisor: (340) 227-1232

### **Emergency Information**

If you have an emergency dial 911. This service works here just like in the states. If you require further assistance, call the Sector San Juan Command Center at (787) 289-2041, RIO St. Croix duty phone at (340) 201-4099 or BFD St. Croix duty phone at (340) 227-0916.

### **Driving**

The roads on St. Croix are often VERY rough, narrow and with many large potholes. A 4x4 vehicle can negotiate many of the roads. Small cars will work, but you may find yourself unwilling to travel certain roads due to the condition of the street.

Roads are rarely named and are often labeled with a route number. Locals do not use these route numbers and will not give directions using names or numbers. Also, most places do not have proper street addresses like you may be used to stateside. Large areas of land on the island are still called by their old plantation name and houses are numbered based on their location in these old plantations.

### **Housing Options**

The island has two historic and charming towns, Christiansted on the east end and Frederiksted on the west end. We do not recommend living in Fredriksted. St. Croix has a high crime rate so finding a good home in a safe area is key. When searching for housing, search the Internet and tour the island so you can get a feel for the different areas. Take your time and use multiple property managers; they only show the properties they manage even if they work for the same real estate agency. Contact the Base San Juan Legal office at (787) 729-2370 or jose.l.suarez@uscg.mil to review your lease prior to signing.

### **Education Services & Child Care Services**

Options for Pre-K include Country Day, Stone House Preschool, Good Hope, A-Z Academy, etc.



## **Animal Services**

On island, there are a few options to care for your pets.

Sugar Mill Veterinary Center, <https://sugarmillvetcenter.com>

Progressive Veterinary Hospital, <http://progressivevethospital.com>

St. Croix Animal Welfare Center, <https://www.stcroixawc.org>

## **Medical**

There is one hospital located on the island for emergency care only, Gov. Juan F. Luis Hospital and Medical Center, [www.jflusvi.org](http://www.jflusvi.org).

## **Recommended Medical Facilities**

Primary Care PLLC has a wide variety of medical services ranging from complete physical exams, wellness and sick Exams for all ages, women's health, men's health, and minor surgical procedures. Phone: (340) 718-7788, <http://primarycarestcroix.com>.

## **Area Familiarization**

It is important to become familiar with the island, as it will be your new home for the next few years. Below are some areas around St. Croix.

### **East End**

The St. Croix RIO/BFD Office is located on the East End. Easternmost point of St. Croix and the United States, Point Udall is a great place to catch the sunrise.

### **Christiansted**

This historical area has a fair amount of shopping, restaurants, both in and along the boardwalk, as well as Fort Christiansvaern run by the National Park Service. On the boardwalk you can get a charter to Buck Island for the day and catch the seaplane.

Nearby, Gallows Bay has shopping and is where you board the ferry to St. Thomas.

### **Salt River Bay**

This bioluminescent bay has plenty of nighttime kayaking tours to choose from. The surrounding area offers some great hikes with scenic views in the island's rainforest.

### **Mid-Island**

This is where the airport is located, has the majority of the shopping and is home to the refinery Limetree Bay Terminals.

## **Frederiksted**

This is where the cruise ships dock when they come into St. Croix. When ships are not there, you are able to jump off, snorkel or dive around the Frederiksted Pier. It is surrounded by beautiful beaches like Rainbow Beach and Sandy Point.

Sandy Point is owned by the National Park Service and is known as a breeding ground for Leatherback Turtles. There are opportunities for the public to come out and witness the hatching.

## **Cellular Phone Service**

AT&T and Sprint are the two carriers that are available on island. If you have another cell phone carrier, you may want to change to AT&T or Sprint before arriving on island. Both have stores available on island. AT&T has the best cell phone reception on island.