



U.S. Virgin Islands

Yacht Arrival and Departure Requirements

IMPORTANT: This is a marina reference guide, not legal advice or an official clearance document. Requirements vary by vessel flag, tonnage, commercial/recreational status, voyage, and traveler status. The vessel master/agent should confirm current requirements directly with CPB, USCG/NVMC, and the Virgin Islands Port Authority before arrival or departure.

Quick Arrival Checklist

- Before entering U.S. waters from a foreign port /place, confirm whether a USCG Notice of Arrival (NOA/eNOAD) is required for the vessel.
- Immediately report arrival from a foreign port/place to U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and follow CBP instructions before persons or goods are cleared.
- Have current vessel registration/documentation, crew/passenger information, passports, and applicable visas/immigration documents ready.
- Confirm pilotage requirements with the Virgin Islands Port Authority/Harbor authorities when applicable.
- Foreign- flagged vessels should confirm cruising license, formal entry/clearance, and customs requirements with CBP.

Updated Requirements

Pilotage

Pilotage is governed by applicable federal and Virgin Islands requirements. VIPA's published tariff states that vessels under 1,600 GRT that do not a pilot may still be assessed pilotage fees, and vessels over 100 GRT but under 1,600 GRT that are exempted or granted a waiver may still owe applicable fees. Vessels carrying dangerous or explosive cargo are required to take a pilot. Because pilotage depends on vessel type, tonnage, and operating authority, confirm directly with VIPA/Harbor authorities before moving.

CBP Arrival Reporting

Pleasure vessels arriving in the United States from a foreign port/place must report their arrival to CBP immediately. The master should follow CBP instructions for inspection/admission and should not assume that Docking at Crown Bay Marina itself completes entry formalities.

USCG Notice of Arrival / eNOAD

Many vessels are subject to USCG Notice of Arrival requirements under 33 CFR Part 160. Important exemptions apply, especially for recreational vessels under 300 gross tons. When NOA applies, submit it electronically through the National Vessel Movement Center (NVMC/eNOAD). For applicable voyages of 96 hours or more, notice is generally due at least 96 hours before arrival; for shorter voyages, timing rules differ. Review the current rule and NVMC guidance for the specific vessel.

Certificate of Financial Responsibility (COFR)

Vessels of 300 gross tons or more may be subject to federal oil- pollution financial responsibility Requirements. Owners/operators should confirm applicability and ensure required COFR documents is current before operating in U.S. navigable waters.

Non- Tank Vessel Response Plan (VTVRP)

Self-propelled non-tank vessels of 400 gross tons or more that are subject to the federal rule generally require an approved Non-Tank Vessel Response Plan. Applicability depends on the vessel and operation; confirm with

CBP Forms/Commercial Vessel Entry

Do not use a one-size-fits-all list of CBP Forms 1300/418 for every yacht. Formal vessel entry, clearance, crew-list, and manifest requirements depend on whether the vessel is commercial or private, its flag, operation, and voyage. The master/agent should confirm the forms required for that particular call with CBP.

U.S /Puerto Rico to USVI

The U.S. Virgin Islands are part of the United States, but the USVI is outside the U.S. customs territory for certain customs purposes. Do not assume that a voyage from the mainland U.S. or Puerto Rico requires the same procedure as a foreign arrival--- or that no CBP procedure applies. Confirm the vessel's specific reporting/entry requirements with CBP.

Vessel Documentation

Carry valid, current vessel registration/documentation, ownership information when applicable, and any certification required for the vessel's flag, tonnage, and operation. Foreign vessels should also have documentation needed for U.S. entry and any applicable cruising license.

Passport and Travel documents

All persons should carry valid travel documents appropriate to their citizenship and status. Do not state a universal 'six months remaining' rule: passport-validity requirements can vary by nationality and agreement. CBP makes the admission determination.

Form I-94

I-94 requirements have not disappeared. For travelers who require an I-94, CBP generally creates the arrival/departure record electronically. Travelers can verify their admission record after entry through CBP's official I-94 service.

Crew Visas

Foreign crew immigration requirements depend on the person's duties, nationality, and vessel operation. C- 1/D or other appropriate visas/status may be required. Do not rely on a blanket statement that every non-U.S. crewmember requires exactly the same visa category; confirm with CBP/Department of State before travel

ESTA/Visa Waiver Program and Private Yachts

Use special care with first entry aboard a private yacht. CBP's Vessel Inspection Guide states that Visa Waiver Program provisions do not apply to persons entering private vessels on initial entry on board. ESTA is not a visa and does not guarantee admission. Travelers should verify eligibility before boarding or attempting entry; where a visa is required, obtain the appropriate visa.

Departure from USVI to Another U.S. Destination

Requirements depend on vessel, voyage, and status. Because USVI has unique customs treatment, the master/agent should confirm CBP requirements before departure rather than assuming that no clearance or reporting is needed.

Departure from USVI to a Foreign Port

Departure – clearance requirements differ for the U.S. private pleasure vessels and foreign-flagged yachts commercial vessels and vessels operating under a cruising license. Private non-commercial U.S. pleasure vessels are generally exempt from formal CBP departure clearance under 19 CFR 4.60 (b), subject to conditions. Foreign vessels and cruising – License holders should confirm clearance /reporting requirements with CBP before departure

Cruising Licenses

A cruising license is not automatically available to every foreign-flagged yacht. Eligibility depends on the vessel's flag and applicable reciprocity. CBP states that cruising licenses are normally valid for up to one year and are obtained from the CBP Port Director at the U.S. port of arrival; specific reissuance rules apply.

U.S. cruising Permit / USVI vs Puerto Rico

Do not use the prior statement that USVI waters never require a U.S. cruising permit while Puerto Rico always does. Cruising – License rules are based primarily on the foreign vessel eligibility and U.S. customs law, not simply on a USVI – versus Puerto Rico distinction. Confirm the vessel's flag and itinerary with CBP

Regulated Garbage

Foreign- arriving vessels can be subject to USDA/APHIS regulated-garbage requirements. Crown Bay Marina lists APHIS-regulated garbage disposal as an available guest service. Coordinate disposal with the marina and follow applicable federal instructions; do not place regulated international waste in ordinary trash.

Traveler Note

- An approved ESTA authorizes eligible Visa Waiver Program travel; it is not a visa and does not guarantee Admission
- CBP makes the final determination on admission of passengers and crew.
- A private yacht's immigration rules can differ from those applying to passengers arriving on a commercial airline or approved commercial carrier
- For international arrivals, remain prepared for CBP inspection and do not allow passengers/crew to proceed ashore contrary to CBP instructions.

Crown Bay Marina Contact

Address	8168 Crown Bay Marina, Suite 528 St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands 00802
Telephone	(340) 774-2255
VHF Channels	16 and 11
Email	info@crownbay.com
Hours	Daily, 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Official Resources

- U.S. Customs and Border Protection- Pleasure Boat Arrival Requirements
- CBP- Pleasure Boat Departure Requirements
- CBP- ESTA/ Visa Waiver Program
- CBP – Cruising Licenses
- CBP - Locate a Port of Entry
- U.S. Coast Guard- National Vessel Movement Center / eNOAD
- Virgin Islands Port Authority
- Crown Bay Marina