

Mission Statement

To issue business and professional licenses, to insure compliance with the Territory's licensing laws; and to protect the health, safety, and rights of the consumer through assistance, education and enforcement of Virgin Islands consumer protection laws.

General Information

The Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs (DLCA) is established under Virgin Islands Code Title 3 Chapter 16 (§270 et seq). It establishes, administers, coordinates and supervises the regulation and licensing of private businesses and professions (as provided for in V.I.C. Title 27 Professions and Occupations §301 et seq). DLCA provides and administers consumer services and programs pursuant to the Consumer Protection Law of 1973 as set forth in the Code (V.I.C. Title 12A Consumer Code §101 et seq).

The Department is empowered to issue rules, regulations, and orders necessary to protect the interest of consumers, to hold public hearings on matters affecting consumer interests, to file any necessary legal action to enforce the rules, regulations, and orders of the Department, and to appear for and in representation of consumers before any court, Board or Department of the Government of the Virgin Islands, in any hearing, or matter that affects or may affect the interests of consumers in general, or groups of consumers. Additionally, it may impose administrative fines for violations of the rules, regulations, and orders prescribed by the Department.

The Department is also empowered to issue Cease and Desist orders to persons violating the consumer protection or business licensing laws.

Divisions

There are seven (7) separate divisions within the Department which include:

Office of the Commissioner

The Office of the Commissioner is, of course, responsible for the overall leadership, management, planning, and supervision of the Department so that it may effectively carry out its mission.

Administration and Business Management

This Division is responsible for all budgeting, accounting, payroll, procurement, and personnel operations of the Department. The Division provides all the resources for the staff to perform their duties in an efficient and professional manner.

Legal

This Division is responsible for providing “in house” legal advice to the Commissioner and the Department, promulgating and implementing rules and regulations, prosecuting violations via hearings, and representing the Department and consumers on legal matters.

Licensing

This Division is responsible for receiving, reviewing, and approving applications for business licenses. It is also responsible for the issuance of the business license and the collections of licenses fees and penalties. Upon receipt of a completed license application which includes all the documentation from other Departments (*Bureau of Internal Revenue, Virgin Island Police Department, Department of Planning and Natural Resources, Virgin Islands Fire Services, and Department of Health*), license fees are collected and the license is issued.

The Alcohol Inspectors are responsible for enforcing the Virgin Islands alcohol laws located is under the Licensing Division. They serve the critical role of ensuring the safety and well being of consumers.

Boards and Commissions

This Division has oversight responsibility for professions and trades, including the licensing of individuals in each area. There are distinct requirements for each of the following nine (9) areas:

- (1) Architects, Engineers, and Land Surveyors
- (2) Barbers, Beauticians, & Manicurists
- (3) Certified Public Accountants
- (4) Electricians
- (5) General Contractors
- (6) Plumbers
- (7) Real Estate Appraisers
- (8) Real Estate Brokers and Salespersons
- (9) Social Workers

Consumer Affairs

The Consumer Affairs Division is responsible for assisting, educating, and protecting consumers against unfair and deceptive trade practices. It advises, guides, and represents consumers in regards to filing of formal complaints against businesses and/or professions and attempts to resolve same. It is also responsible for the establishment and enforcement of weights and measurement standards in the Virgin Islands.

Within the Consumer Affairs Division is a separate Consumer Protection Services Unit responsible for the development and implementation of consumer education programs and

activities, addressing consumer complaints, and monitoring business practices throughout the Territory for compliance of consumer laws.

The Weights and Measures Unit is also within this Division. It is responsible for maintaining the official Territorial standards for weights and measures and ensuring that all commercial weighing and measuring devices used for trade or commerce in the Territory are accurate in accordance with the National Institute of Standards Technology (NIST) guidelines. The Unit also enforces all laws and regulations pertaining to food freshness, net contents of packaged goods, and unit pricing.

Enforcement

The Enforcement Division enforces consumer laws by inspecting all businesses to ensure compliance with Virgin Islands licensing laws. Additionally, the Enforcement Officers serve documents on behalf of the Legal Division and Boards and Commissions as needed. The Division serves a critical role of ensuring the safety and well being of consumers. The Division also regularly participates on task force and joint initiatives with Virgin Islands Police Department, Office of the Governor, Department of Health, and private entities as needed. It serves the critical role of ensuring the safety and well being of consumers.