



Coast Guard suspends search for missing pilots following plane crash near St. Thomas, USVI

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SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — The Coast Guard suspended the search for two missing people, Monday at 6 p.m., following a report of an overdue plane last seen Friday between the islands of St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands and Culebra, Puerto Rico.

Missing is 33-year-



Coast Guard suspends search for missing pilots, after plane crash near Saint Thomas, USVI

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old ([REDACTED] and 19-year-old [REDACTED]

Officials from the Center of Radar Approach Control (CERAP) notified U.S. Coast Guard Sector San Juan watchstanders at approximately 9:30 p.m., Friday, reporting they had lost radar signal from a Cessna Skyhawk, 6 miles west of St. Thomas.

Coast Guard watchstanders directed the launch of a Coast Guard MH-60T Jayhawk helicopter from Air Station Borinquen and a Boat Forces Detachment St. Thomas rescue crew to initially search the area.

The Cessna originally took off from Rafael Hernandez Airport in Aguadilla, Puerto Rico with intentions to make a practice approach in St. Thomas and return to Aguadilla.

“Suspending search efforts is one the hardest decisions to be made, but after saturating the search area with no signs of the downed aircraft, I've suspended the Coast Guard search pending further developments,” said Capt. Jose Diaz, commander, Coast Guard Sector San Juan. “Our thoughts are with the family and friends of the missing passengers during this difficult time.”

Rescue crews searched approximately 6,387 square miles, and a combined total of 45 hours.

Search and rescue crews include:

- Coast Guard Air Station Borinquen
- Coast Guard Air Station Elizabeth City
- Coast Guard Cutter Confidence
- Coast Guard Station San Juan
- Coast Guard Auxiliary Air
- Civil Air Patrol
- Puerto Rico Police Department Joint Forces of Rapid Action (FURA)
- Coast Guard Boat Forces Detachment St. Thomas
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection Caribbean Air and Marine Branch (CAMB)

Anyone with information related to this case may contact the Coast Guard Sector San Juan Command Center at 787-289-2041.

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