

**TITLE 48 - TERRITORIES AND INSULAR POSSESSIONS**  
**CHAPTER 12 - VIRGIN ISLANDS**  
**SUBCHAPTER V - JUDICIAL BRANCH**

**§ 1613a. Appellate jurisdiction of District Court; procedure; review by United States Court of Appeals for Third Circuit; rules; appeals to appellate court**

**(a) Appellate jurisdiction of District Court**

Prior to the establishment of the appellate court authorized by section 1611 (a) of this title, the District Court of the Virgin Islands shall have such appellate jurisdiction over the courts of the Virgin Islands established by local law to the extent now or hereafter prescribed by local law: Provided, That the legislature may not preclude the review of any judgment or order which involves the Constitution, treaties, or laws of the United States, including this chapter, or any authority exercised thereunder by an officer or agency of the Government of the United States, or the conformity of any law enacted by the legislature of the Virgin Islands or of any order or regulation issued or action taken by the executive branch of the government of the Virgin Islands with the Constitution, treaties, or laws of the United States, including this chapter, or any authority exercised thereunder by an officer or agency of the United States.

**(b) Appellate division of District Court; quorum; presiding judge; designation of judges; decisions**

Appeals to the District Court of the Virgin Islands shall be heard and determined by an appellate division of the court consisting of three judges, of whom two shall constitute a quorum. The chief judge of the district court shall be the presiding judge of the appellate division and shall preside therein unless disqualified or otherwise unable to act. The other judges who are to sit in the appellate division at any session shall be designated by the presiding judge from among the judges who are serving on, or are assigned to, the district court from time to time pursuant to section 1614 (a) of this chapter: Provided, That no more than one of them may be a judge of a court established by local law. The concurrence of two judges shall be necessary to any decision by the appellate division of the district court on the merits of an appeal, but the presiding judge alone may make any appropriate orders with respect to an appeal prior to the hearing and determination thereof on the merits and may dismiss an appeal for want of jurisdiction or failure to take or prosecute it in accordance with the applicable law or rules of procedure. Appeals pending in the district court on the effective date of this Act<sup>1</sup> shall be heard and determined by a single judge.

**(c) United States Court of Appeals for Third Circuit; jurisdiction; appeals; rules**

The United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit shall have jurisdiction of appeals from all final decisions of the district court on appeal from the courts established by local law. The United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit shall have jurisdiction to promulgate rules necessary to carry out the provisions of this subsection.

**(d) Appeals to appellate court; effect on District Court**

Upon the establishment of the appellate court provided for in section 1611 (a) of this title all appeals from the decisions of the courts of the Virgin Islands established by local law not previously taken must be taken to that appellate court. The establishment of the appellate court shall not result in the loss of jurisdiction of the district court over any appeal then pending in it. The rulings of the district court on such appeals may be reviewed in the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit and in the Supreme Court notwithstanding the establishment of the appellate court.

**Footnotes**

<sup>1</sup> See References in Text note below.

(July 22, 1954, ch. 558, § 23A, as added Pub. L. 98-454, title VII, § 705, Oct. 5, 1984, 98 Stat. 1739.)

*NB: This unofficial compilation of the U.S. Code is current as of Jan. 5, 2009 (see <http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/uscpri.html>).*

### **References in Text**

This chapter, referred to in subsecs. (a) and (b), was in the original “this Act”, meaning act July 22, 1954, ch. 558, 68 Stat. 497, as amended, known as the Revised Organic Act of the Virgin Islands, which is classified principally to this chapter. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 1541 of this title and Tables.

The effective date of this Act, referred to in subsec. (b), probably means the effective date of title VII of Pub. L. 98–454, which is 90 days after Oct. 5, 1984, and which enacted this section.

### **Effective Date**

Section effective on ninetieth day following Oct. 5, 1984, see section 1005 of Pub. L. 98–454, set out as an Effective Date of 1984 Amendment note under section 1424 of this title.