

Northern Sunshine Coast Ferry Advisory Committee (NSCFAC)

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Ferry Advisory Committee is made up of a cross-section of community members who have volunteered from throughout the region. We address local concerns with the ferry service and offer our advice to the service provider, BC Ferries [British Columbia Ferry Services Inc.]. The public may contact any member of the committee to discuss a concern. For all questions relating to regular schedules, fares, and services please go to BC Ferries directly by consulting the website www.bcferries.com or by calling toll-free 1-888-223-3779.

If you have a concern or issue with using the ferry service for our three local routes, the Ferry Advisory Committee may be able to help you with information and assistance or advice on who to contact. Powell River is served by:

Route 7 – Saltery Bay / Earls Cove (Sunshine Coast)

Route 17 – Westview / Comox (Vancouver Island)

Route 18 – Westview / Blubber Bay (Texada Island)

We also have some travel tips and advice for using the ferries that may not be included in brochures or in stated policies on the website. For example, there are several ‘practices’ which may help you but which are not official policy because the company cannot guarantee them for practical reasons.

BC Ferries Practices currently in place for Routes 7, 17 & 18

“Practices” are actions that BC Ferries will take on a ‘case by case’ basis depending on specific circumstances. BCF does make an effort to avoid customers having a bad experience for the situations identified below, but cannot guarantee to do so every time or that the result will be successful. BC Ferries has had and continues to have the following informal practices in place.

Practice 1 – Reservations on Route 3 – Langdale / Horseshoe Bay

If route 7 (Saltery Bay/Earls Cove) is running behind schedule and you have a reservation on route 3 at Langdale that is in danger of being lost because of the ‘be there 30 minutes ahead of departure’ requirement, then you should do the following:

- Advise the person in the ticket booth at Saltery Bay that you have a reservation for a specific Langdale sailing.
- Request that the terminal phone ahead, explain the situation and ask that the 30-minute requirement be dropped for this specific customer.
- If you arrive at the Langdale terminal prior to the start of the loading process the Langdale staff will make reasonable efforts to try to accommodate the reservation.

Practice 2 – Last sailing of the day, route 7, Earls Cove to Saltery Bay

If route 3, Horseshoe Bay to Langdale is running late and you are in danger of missing the last sailing of the day from Earls Cove you should do the following:

- Contact the Chief Steward on the route 3 vessel, provide vehicle information and explain that you’re planning to catch the last sailing and may not get there in time.
- Request the Chief Steward phone ahead and ask that the vessel be held for a late arriving customer.
- The Island Sky may, at the Captains discretion, wait up to 30 minutes if this communication takes place, in order to avoid the customer having to spend the night on the Sechelt Peninsula. The Captain will only wait for the vehicles that have been identified by the route 3 vessel.

Practice 3 – Through ticket for walk-on passenger leaving Texada going to Comox

If you are a foot passenger traveling from Texada to Comox and are unable to walk to the Westview Terminal ticket booth for reasons of health or age, you should do the following:

- Make your need known to a crew member on the Texada ferry so that the Purser/Chief Steward on the Comox ferry can be advised to expect the dock transfer of passenger(s) with no tickets/boarding passes that will need to be processed after boarding.
- After disembarking from the Texada ferry, remain at the passenger area on the dock and explain your situation as above to the ticket attendant on the dock.
- Once on board, purchase the ticket from the Purser/Chief Steward.

Practice 4 – Texada Island passengers traveling to the Lower Mainland for medical appointments

TAP forms can be processed at the Saltery Bay ticket booth for Texada Island passengers. You should do the following:

- Before arriving at the ticket booth ensure that the TAP form is completely filled out and signed, including the confirmation number; the TAP form must have the confirmation number in order to be processed.
- Remember that if the TAP form is for a return trip be sure to get tickets for the return trip, including one to Texada.

Practice 5 – Route 17 - Comox/ Powell River, large event notification (also other routes)

If a group, organization or individual is involved in planning a large event that will draw a significant number of people from Vancouver Island or involve large groups leaving Powell River and there is a concern that it may create an overload situation at the Little River Terminal or the Westview Terminal, BCF should be contacted as follows:

- At least seven (7) days before the event, contact BC Ferries at eventnotification@bcferries.com or Customer Relations at 1-877-222-1949 and provide the following information:
 - Name of event [i.e. Sports teams, School groups, Seafair events, Bike rally, etc.]
 - Times and dates
 - Affected route, route 17 as above, or either of the other two if applicable
 - Contact information for the organizer
 - Expected numbers
- BC Ferries will utilize that information in their planning process for passenger license level on the route 17 vessel and will attempt to accommodate your event. For other local routes where there is only one license level for passengers, BCF may, if it is feasible, choose to publish a ‘high traffic expected’ notice as they have done from time to time.

Practice 6 – Route 7 – Saltery Bay or Earls Cove vehicles boarding on the *Island Sky*

Some travelers may not want to be directed to park on the upper vehicle level accessed by ramps. This is potentially a problem for elderly people, disabled persons or passengers with infants or small children in tow. It could be a safety risk particularly in stormy weather with wind, rain or snow. The reason is that you may find yourself trapped at that mid-level because it is necessary to take a fully exposed exterior stairway to the passenger lounges and washrooms. The alternative is to walk down the ramp to the main car deck to access the elevator or enclosed stairs, but the ramp too is exposed to the weather and may be slippery. BC Ferries has informed the Advisory Committee that passengers may request to be parked on the main car deck to avoid the issues with the ramp area. Please ask the Ticket Agent (or terminal attendant at Earls Cove) if you can be put in the handicapped lane. Depending on deck space availability they will direct you to the appropriate lane and provide instructions. During the summer months it may not be possible to accommodate your request.

It is important to note that all of the above are informal practices BC Ferries has put in place in an effort to provide you with service that exceeds your expectations. BC Ferries will do their best, however, you should not expect that they will be able to accommodate you every time. As well, these practices may change from time so check this document periodically to ensure you are up-to-date on current practices.

Northern Sunshine Coast Ferry Advisory Committee Membership

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