BC Ferries’ Medical Assured Loading Program

Customers and medical personnel, please review the following before a request is submitted.

Medical Assured Loading (MAL) is a BC Ferries program offered for eligible patients who need to travel for urgent medical reasons by personal vehicle. MAL provides patients with improved travel certainty provided they meet eligibility criteria and conditions as set by BC Ferries. This program is designed to reduce time at the terminal for those in need of urgent care where an extended wait would cause risk to their health.

A patient’s doctor must apply for Medical Assured Loading through BC Ferries (patients are unable to make the request on their own). Those who meet the criteria will be provided with a Medical Assured Loading letter to be presented to the ticket agent at time of check-in, along with their completed Travel Assistance Program (TAP) form.

Eligibility Criteria and Conditions

To be eligible for Medical Assured Loading, patients must:

- Be travelling with a completed Travel Assistance Program form, including Medical Services Plan confirmation number,
- Be travelling to emergency medical care,
- Be returning from medical treatment where discharge time is unknown and medical condition would make waiting at terminal detrimental to recovery, or;
- Other medical conditions as deemed appropriate by BC Ferries and the referring doctor or agency.

Medical Assured Loading is not available for general, elective or routine doctor, dentist or specialist appointments. The number of assured loading spaces on each sailing is limited and varies by vessel and sailing. If these spaces are full when the patient arrives, it may be necessary to travel on the next available sailing. If guaranteed travel is required, a reservation is recommended on reservable routes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligible Examples</th>
<th>Non-eligible Examples</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Fractures requiring x-ray</td>
<td>- Regular travel</td>
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<td>- Injuries requiring hospital care</td>
<td>- General medical appointments</td>
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<td>- Active cancer treatment</td>
<td>- Specialist appointments</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Chemo/radiotherapy treatments</td>
<td>- Follow-up appointments</td>
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<td>- Dialysis</td>
<td>- Non-urgent dental appointments</td>
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<td>- Pneumonia</td>
<td>- Routine exams</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Abdominal pain requiring hospital care</td>
<td>- Specialty services (lab tests, radiology, immunizations, physiotherapy)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Returning from major surgery</td>
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Please note, Medical Assured Loading does not guarantee loading on the upper open vehicle deck. Transport Canada requires passengers loaded on the lower enclosed vehicle deck to exit their vehicle while the vessel is underway. Patients may make a request to be placed on the upper open vehicle deck when they arrive at the terminal ticket booth. BC Ferries will work to accommodate the request based on space availability. Medical Assured Loading also does not ensure the user to first on/first off-loading.

**Requesting Medical Assured Loading**

Only doctors, nurses (RN, NP) and clinical social workers providing current care can submit the request to BC Ferries on the patient’s behalf (see Information for Medical Professionals below). The request, listing specific appointment dates, is to be submitted to BC Ferries on official letterhead of the medical professional submitting the request and contain the doctor’s stamp along with the doctor’s signature approving the request.

**Need for Travel Assistance Program (TAP) form**

Medical Assured Loading works in conjunction with the Travel Assistance Program provided by the BC Provincial Government. Medical Assured Loading will only be granted to patients travelling with a completed TAP form (pink form), including Medical Services Plan confirmation number.

TAP is a corporate partnership between the Ministry of Health and private transportation carriers. Additional information on the TAP program can be found here:

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/accessing-health-care/tap-bc/travel-assistance-program-tap-bc.

**Travel Requirements**

Patients who have a Medical Assured Loading letter need to:
- Arrive at the ticket booth at least 30 minutes in advance of the scheduled sailing time
- Have the MAL letter and completed TAP form available to present to the ticket agent

Patients travelling on BC Ferries’ fully reservable routes are encouraged to contact BC Ferries to book a complimentary reservation in advance of their travel as MAL letters are not available for travel on these routes. Fully reservable routes include travel between: Tsawwassen - Southern Gulf Islands, Port Hardy - Prince Rupert, Prince Rupert - Haida Gwaii, Port Hardy - the mid-Coast.

**Information for Medical Professionals**

We ask all medical professionals to please consider the intent of the Medical Assured Loading program before granting these requests. Email Customer.Relations@bcferries.com to request the MAL request form. The doctor/clinic/hospital is required to fill out the form in its entirety. This includes patient name, specific appointment dates, departing and arriving terminals and vehicle description. Incomplete forms will NOT be processed and will be returned to the sender. Completed forms can be emailed to the same address or faxed to 250-978-1240.

- It is the customer’s responsibility to follow up with their doctor, clinic or hospital.
- BCF will only follow up if there is a problem with completion of the request form.

BC Ferries tracks the Medical Assured Loading letters to ensure validity. Invalid letters will not be accepted.