

Medical Assured Loading Program

August 2018

BC Ferries' Medical Assured Loading Program

Medical Assured Loading (MAL) is a BC Ferries program offered for eligible patients who need to travel to and/or from a critical medical appointment 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 wait time at the terminal for those in need of critical care.

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 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 and/or from a critical or emergency medical appointment or be travelling due to a life-threatening illness, and;
- Be experiencing undue or extreme discomfort and difficulty waiting at the terminal.
- Other medical conditions as deemed appropriate by BC Ferries and the referring doctor or agency.

Medical Assured Loading is not available for general 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.

Please note, Medical Assured Loading does not guarantee loading on the upper open vehicle deck. Transport Canada requires passengers loaded on the lower enclosed car 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.

Requesting Medical Assured Loading

A medical unit social worker, hospital, clinic or doctor must submit the request to BC Ferries on the patient's behalf (see Information for Medical Professionals below). The request is to be submitted to BC Ferries on official letterhead of the medical professional submitting the request, or contain the doctor's stamp.

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 Medical Assured Loading letter and completed TAP form available to present to the ticket agent

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

Information for Medical Professionals

Email Customer.Relations@bcferries.com to request the Medical Assured Loading request form. Completed forms can be emailed to the same address or faxed to 250-978-1240.

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