

For Immediate Release
17-080

August 22, 2017

BC FERRIES IMPLEMENTS SMOKE-FREE ENVIRONMENT BEGINNING IN JANUARY 2018

VICTORIA – BC Ferries announced today that as of January 22, 2018, the company will introduce a smoke-free environment on board all of its vessels and at its terminals. This coincides with National Non-Smoking Week, which runs from January 21 to 28, 2018.

Last year, the Province amended regulations for no smoking buffer zones around any doorway, intake or open window to any public or workplace from three metres to six metres. Due to the physical space available from doors on the outer decks of BC Ferries' large vessels and on the vehicle decks of smaller vessels, the new regulation means all vessels will need to become smoke-free environments. In reviewing our policy on smoking in remaining areas, BC Ferries is choosing to introduce a smoke-free environment on all BC Ferries properties, including vessels, terminals and other operations, to support the health and wellness of our passengers and employees.

“BC Ferries made the decision to provide a smoke-free environment for the travelling public and our employees on board our ships and at our terminals,” said Mark Collins, BC Ferries' President and CEO. “This new policy supports the health and wellness of our customers and employees, as it helps control their exposure to second-hand smoke. We continue to focus on improving our customers' experience, and providing the safest working environment for our crews.”

BC Ferries is providing advanced notice of the policy change to provide passengers and employees who smoke time to adjust to this change.

The new smoke-free policy will apply to tobacco, marijuana and e-cigarettes, and is expected to reduce the number of complaints BC Ferries receives from customers related to second-hand smoke. Announcements regarding the new policy will be made on board the vessels and at the terminals, and signage will be placed on board the vessels and on shore as a reminder of the new policy.

“Smoking tobacco continues to be one of the single largest threats to the health of British Columbians and our visitors,” said Island Health's Dr. Dee Hoyano, Medical Health Officer. “By going smoke-free in its terminals and on its vessels, BC Ferries is supporting healthier, cleaner and safer environments for everyone.”

To coincide with the introduction of the new policy, BC Ferries has launched a comprehensive employee smoking cessation program. Support is also available for members of the public who wish to quit smoking, including the B.C. government's [Smoking Cessation Program](#).

– 30 –

Frequently Asked Questions below.

Media Contact:
BC Ferries, Media Relations
Victoria: (250) 978-1267

Customer Contact:
Victoria: (250) 386-3431
Toll-free: 1-888-BCFERRY (1-888-223-3779)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. When will BC Ferries offer a smoke-free environment?

BC Ferries will introduce a smoke-free environment on board all BC Ferries vessels and terminals in January 2018. This coincides with National Non-Smoking Week, which runs from January 21 to 28, 2018.

2. Why is BC Ferries going smoke-free?

BC Ferries is introducing a smoke-free environment for the health and wellness of our customers and employees as it helps reduce their exposure to second-hand smoke. BC Ferries receives many requests from our customers to offer a smoke-free environment.

3. Is there a reason you're waiting until January to introduce a smoke-free environment?

BC Ferries is implementing the new policy in six months to allow employees who smoke the time to adjust to changes at their work place. In addition, the company wants to provide customers with ample notice. This also coincides with National Non-Smoking Week, which runs from January 21 to 28, 2018.

4. Does this apply to all routes and all terminals?

BC Ferries will introduce a smoke-free environment on board all BC Ferries vessels and terminals in January 2018.

5. Will this apply to medical marijuana?

BC Ferries is implementing a smoke-free environment. This new policy is important for the health and wellness of our customers and employees as it helps control their exposure to second-hand smoke. No smoking of any kind will be permitted, including medical marijuana. Medical marijuana users can either use edible products or manage their medical issues before or after they travel on our ferries.

6. Will this apply to vapour products?

BC Ferries is implementing a smoke-free environment. This new policy is important for the health and wellness of our customers and employees as it helps control their exposure to second-hand smoke. No smoking of any kind will be permitted, including vapour products and e-cigarettes.

7. How will BC Ferries enforce this policy?

BC Ferries will take a soft approach to policy enforcement and remind customers of the no smoking policy. Announcements regarding the new policy will be made on board the vessels and at the terminals, and signage will be placed on board the vessels and on shore as a reminder of the new policy. Other organizations that offer smoke-free environments have found the public self-regulates the policy.

8. What about employees who smoke?

BC Ferries is offering an integrated health and wellness strategy for employees who smoke including smoking cessation programs and nicotine replacement therapies. Smoking on BC Ferries' property will not be an option for employees as of January 2018.

9. If I see someone smoking on the outer decks or in the terminal compound, what should I do?

Please bring it to the attention of any crew member. They can approach the customer to remind them of the no smoking policy.