

Lower Closed Vehicle Deck Access



Passengers must exit lower closed vehicle decks during voyage.

On October 11, 2017, BC Ferries will harmonize its safety practices with Canadian ferry operators relating to Transport Canada regulations that prohibit passengers from remaining in their vehicle on any closed deck on a vessel that is underway.

A closed vehicle deck is a space that is closed at both ends with limited side openings. Access restrictions to closed vehicle decks will not apply when passengers are directed by announcement to return to their vehicles before the vessel docks.

The new policy applies to the lower vehicle decks on the following vessels:

- Spirit of British Columbia
- Spirit of Vancouver Island
- Coastal Celebration
- Coastal Inspiration
- Coastal Renaissance
- Queen of Alberni
- Queen of Coquitlam
- Queen of Cowichan
- Queen of New Westminster
- Queen of Oak Bay
- Queen of Nanaimo
- Queen of Surrey
- Salish Orca
- Salish Eagle
- Salish Raven
- Northern Expedition
- Northern Adventure
- New vessel servicing Port Hardy – Bella Coola

These vessels generally operate on the Tsawwassen – Swartz Bay, Tsawwassen – Duke Point, Horseshoe Bay – Departure Bay, Horseshoe Bay – Langdale, Powell River – Comox, Tsawwassen – Southern Gulf Islands, Port Hardy – Prince Rupert and Prince Rupert – Haida Gwaii routes. The policy also applies to the vessel that will operate the Port Hardy – Bella Coola route.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why does BC Ferries have to comply now after the regulation has been around since 2007?

Since 2007, BC Ferries has maintained a continuous car deck patrol. BC Ferries and Transport Canada recently re-examined the policy and in an effort to coordinate safety practices will change the application of the regulation. The regulation in question is Section 152 of the Cargo, Tackle and Fumigation Regulations under the Canada Shipping Act. For more information, visit tc.gc.ca

Why are customers allowed on the upper decks?

Transport Canada's regulation only applies to enclosed vehicle decks. The upper vehicle deck is open to the external environment and is not affected by the regulations.

Are any vehicles exempt and why?

The vehicles that are not required to comply with the regulations are vehicles that due to the nature of their operation require their operators to be present, including but not limited to: ambulances, other emergency vehicles and livestock carriers.

How can I request/book/reserve to be on the upper vehicle deck?

Customers with special circumstances such as medical difficulties, challenges or special needs that may preclude them exiting their vehicle may make a request to be on the upper vehicle deck by letting the ticket agent know when they arrive at the terminal. Where this is possible, BC Ferries will try and accommodate your request. For vehicles that arrive close to the time of boarding or once boarding has commenced, it may not be possible to accommodate the request. The final decision to load a vehicle on the upper or lower car deck rests with the Loading Officer who is responsible for the safe stowage of all vehicles/cargo.

If I have a pet, can I request the upper vehicle deck?

Customers can request to be on the upper vehicle deck by letting the ticket agent know when they arrive at the terminal that they prefer to be on the upper vehicle deck. Where this is possible, BC Ferries will try and accommodate the request. Where this is not possible, passengers with pets can use the pet areas located on the upper (open) vehicle decks. Pets will be allowed to remain in vehicles on the lower vehicle deck, but their owners are requested to leave the lower car deck.

For more information, visit bcferries.com

