BC FERRIES TO THE RESCUE
One hundred and eleven emergency situations in last year

VICTORIA – In the past several weeks and during the height of its busy summer season, BC Ferries has responded to five marine rescues and two medical emergencies. In the last year alone, extremely well trained crews at BC Ferries responded to 111 emergencies at sea and medical emergencies.

Emergency situations play havoc with ferry schedules, as they often result in vessels being delayed for several sailings and sometimes for the remainder of the operating day.

The following is a summary of the most recent emergencies at sea:

- On August 2, the Queen of New Westminster launched its rescue boat to assist a sinking 34-foot pleasure craft five miles off Entrance Island. The ferry, which services the Duke Point – Tsawwassen route, was approximately one hour late as a result.

- On July 31, the MV Quinsam assisted an overturned sailboat off of Descanso Bay, Gabriola Island. Crew in BC Ferries’ rescue boat saved the two sailboat occupants who were in the water and towed the vessel to shore.

- On July 28, the Queen of Cowichan was called to assist a pleasure craft that was taking on water in the Strait of Georgia. The ferry, which was en route from Horseshoe Bay to Departure Bay, launched its rescue boat and the crew members assisted in making repairs to a water pump on the disabled vessel.

- On July 27, a Mayne Island resident jumped from the Spirit of British Columbia and swam ashore. The ferry, along with the Spirit of Vancouver Island and the Queen of Nanaimo, launched rescue boats in an effort to rescue the man who later refused assistance. This resulted in a half-hour delay of the Spirit of British Columbia for the remainder of the day.

- On July 18, an elderly woman collapsed and showed no vital signs onboard the Queen of Cumberland en route to the Southern Gulf Islands. Two nurses assisted BC Ferries’ Occupational First Aid attendant and CPR was applied, and the woman’s vital signs were restored. The vessel returned to Swartz Bay to meet a waiting ambulance and the passenger was taken to hospital.
• On July 15, the Queen of the North was en route from Port Hardy to Prince Rupert when diverted to Hartley Bay. A man suffering a reported heart attack required emergency evacuation and poor weather conditions prohibited an air ambulance evacuation.

• On July 5, the Queen of Nanaimo was called to assist a small vessel in distress off Roberts Bank Coal Port. Both the ferry and Tsawwassen terminal launched a rescue boat. The vessel and its occupants were towed safely to shore.

BC Ferries crew are highly trained in a variety of emergency procedures including advanced safety training, marine fire fighting and occupational first aid. Fire and evacuation drills are conducted approximately once a week on all vessels.

With approximately 500 sailings per day and a fleet of 35 vessels covering the entire coast of British Columbia, BC Ferries’ crews are ready to respond to an emergency at sea in a moment’s notice.

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