

# BRITISH COLUMBIA FERRY SERVICE INC. (BCFS)

## DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING COMPLAINTS PROCESS

*Coastal Ferry Act*  
219 Section 45.2  
Complaints Process

- (1) Each ferry operator must, within the period required by the commissioner,
  - (a) identify to the commissioner the process the ferry operator intends to use to deal with customer complaints,
  - (b) obtain the commissioner's approval of that process, and
  - (c) publish the approved customer complaints process in the manner required by the commissioner.
- (2) The complaints process referred to in subsection (1) must include a process by which the ferry operator will report on the number, nature and disposition of the customer complaints received in the reporting period.
- (3) The ferry operator may propose amendments to the complaint process approved under this section and may amend the complaints process in accordance with any such amendment that is approved by the commissioner.
- (4) The commissioner may order the ferry operator to amend its complaints process, and in that event, the ferry operator must, within the period required by the commissioner, provide required amendments to the commissioner and obtain the commissioner's approval to the amended process.
- (5) Each ferry operator must receive and process customer complaints in accordance with the complaints process approved by the commissioner under this section.

### PROCESS OBJECTIVE

The purpose of the Customer Complaints Process is to:

- Respond to customer complaints at the first point of contact by providing tools and information to front-line staff to assist in immediate resolution, and when necessary escalate the complaint to Customer Relations;
- Ensure customers receive a timely response when complaints are escalated to Customer Relations, BC Ferries' Executive, BC Ferries' Board of Directors, or the BC Ferry Commission;
- Learn from customer feedback and improve services, where ever possible.

### COMPLAINT CHANNELS

#### Front Line Staff

Customer complaints are received by BC Ferries' terminal and vessel staff daily, and for the most part, are resolved at the first point of contact and not formally recorded.

Repetitive issues or concerns reported by customers to the front-line staff are raised to their local management for review. The operations management team work with the front-line supervisors to resolve issues, improve customer service, procedures and policies for their respective lines of business. This process also occurs in other non-operational areas of the business.

If the staff member cannot resolve the customer's concern at this first point of contact, the customer is provided a 'contact card' and asked to phone Customer Care. All concerns received are documented by Customer Relations in the correspondence database - ResponseTek.

Options for contacting a customer service representative:

Phone 1-888-BC FERRY (223-3779)  
Fax 250-978-1240  
Mobile \*BCF (\*223) on Rogers or Telus mobility networks  
TTY Telus Relay Service at either 711 or 1-800-972-6509  
Online [Contact Us](#)  
Letter BC Ferries, Customer Relations  
Suite 500-1321 Blanshard Street  
Victoria, BC V8W 0B7

Social Media [Twitter @bcferries](#)  
[Facebook](#)

**BRITISH COLUMBIA FERRY SERVICE INC. (BCFS)  
DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING COMPLAINTS PROCESS (CONT'D)**

**COMPLAINT HANDLING PROCESS**

The average number of complaints received through all channels varies by month. The majority of feedback is received between May-October with an average of 1,100 comments per month. A summary of customer feedback is reported to the BC Ferry Commissioner quarterly and published on BC Ferries' website at bcferries.com.

Customer complaints not handled at one of the first points of contact (vessel or terminal) often come to Customer Relations through the Customer Service Centre (CSC). Both Customer Relations and the CSC fall under the Customer Care Department.

The CSC handles inbound calls to 1-888-BC FERRY (223-3779), as well as comments made through social media channels. The CSC receives general customer inquiries about booking requests, BCF Vacations, Assured Loading (ALT) and Experience Cards, film/charter bookings, loading requests, and customer complaints. Consistent with the vessel and terminal process, general inquiries handled at this first point of contact in the CSC are not recorded in ResponseTek. All questions and complaints/compliments that need to be escalated to the Customer Relations team are entered into ResponseTek by the CSC staff.

*Step 1 – Entering Feedback into ResponseTek (Database)*

All incoming customer correspondence addressed to the Boards of BC Ferry Authority (BCFA) and BCFS, the President & CEO of BCFS, and the Executive of BCFS, or referred to BCFS from the office of the BC Ferry Commissioner, MLAs, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, or is received by Customer Relations is then logged and tracked in the correspondence database - ResponseTek. This database is used to categorize the feedback, track the actions taken to resolve the customer concern, and track status of each piece of correspondence. The response to each correspondent is also added into this database.

All feedback received through ResponseTek, on the BCFS website, is automatically tabulated in a real-time reporting system to provide BCFS management with immediate access to customer satisfaction results and feedback. Feedback received in the form of phone calls, emails, social media or letters is also entered into this online system manually.

*Step 2 – Review and Assign*

All comments entered into ResponseTek are reviewed by the Manager, Customer Relations who assigns each comment to a staff member to respond. The response time assigned to each comment varies by priority:

Urgent (1-3 days)	Customer requires an immediate response. Compensation issue, corrective action to be taken or issue related to safety and/or security (the number one priority). All efforts are made to contact the customer by phone.
ASAP (4-7 days)	Customer has a complaint about a specific incident or interaction that occurred while travelling with BCFS. The customer will receive acknowledgement of their concern and be advised that an investigation into the incident will take place. Follow-up will occur after the investigation is complete.
Scheduled (7-14 days)	Customer complaint is classified as a general comment/question related to policy, procedure, or a request for non-time sensitive information.
Immediate Close	No customer contact information provided, or correspondence contains overly aggressive negative feedback and/or threatening language.

## **BRITISH COLUMBIA FERRY SERVICE INC. (BCFS)**

### **DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING COMPLAINTS PROCESS (CONT'D)**

The ResponseTek database tracks the progress of the actions set within the system. Overdue Alerts are sent out if the comment is not resolved within the prescribed timelines. The Manager, Customer Relations monitors the response times/delays and the file closure metrics. Formal response targets are tracked as a Stale Response Resolution metric:

A percentage of passenger comments within the ResponseTek system that did not receive a response from the Customer Relations team within 7 days in Fiscal Quarters 3 and 4 and 14 days in Fiscal Quarters 1 and 2, of the comment having been submitted.

#### *Step 3 - The Response*

Customer Relations acknowledges all incoming correspondence, with the exception of those containing overly aggressive negative feedback and/or threatening language. For instance, customers contacting BC Ferries through its online customer feedback form receive an automated response thanking them for their feedback and providing a response time target. Customers who send in letters will also receive an interim response or a phone call to acknowledge their comments if their concern is unable to be resolved within the required time period. A more detailed response is provided to customers who require additional information or assistance. There are many customers who contact BC Ferries throughout the year who either do not provide any contact details to enable an acknowledgement to be sent, or request a response not be provided.

#### *Step 4 - Escalation Process*

A customer who is not satisfied with the response or resolution from the Customer Relations team is escalated to the Director, Customer Care who will review their complaint. If the customer wants to escalate their complaint further, the Vice President, Marketing & Customer Experience or the President & CEO of BCFS will review their complaint and provide a final response on behalf of the Company.

Escalation to the Office of British Columbia Ferries Commissioner (Commissioners)

If the complainant feels the issue is not resolved to their satisfaction:

- The complainant may contact the Commissioners by way of a written submission within 30 days of final response from BCFS, including copies of all correspondence between the complainant and BCFS as evidence that the complainant has exhausted all avenues for complaints within BCFS;
- If the Commissioners determine that the issue does not fall within their jurisdiction, they will advise the complainant and BCFS accordingly;

Examples of the types of complaints that do not fall within the jurisdiction of the Commissioners:

- Customer service-recovery issues
- Operational issues
- Environmental issues
- Human rights issues
- Safety issues

Examples of the types of complaints that fall within the jurisdiction of the Commissioners:

- Price cap related matters for regulated fares
- Compliance with the *Coastal Ferry Act*, Coastal Ferry Services Contract and Commissioners' Orders
- Matters related to unfair competitive advantage
- Customer complaint process

If the Commissioners are satisfied that all avenues of complaint at BCFS have been exhausted and have determined that the issue falls within their jurisdiction, the Commissioners will:

- Advise BCFS of the complainant's submission;
- At the Commissioners' discretion, require the complainant and BCFS to further attempt to resolve the matter before the Commissioners accept, begin or continue their review;

## **BRITISH COLUMBIA FERRY SERVICE INC. (BCFS)**

### **DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING COMPLAINTS PROCESS (CONT'D)**

- If necessary, request further written submissions from either, or both, BCFS and the complainant to respond to Commissioners' questions regarding the complaint;
- Share any written submission in response to the Commissioners' queries with the other party to provide that party an opportunity to respond with a written submission;
- Once satisfied with the information received, determine whether or not BCFS's response is fair and reasonable and consistent with its current policies and procedures; and
- Advise both parties of the reasons for the determination.

#### *Step 5 – Reporting and Continuous Improvement*

Senior managers within BCFS have access to ResponseTek. Dashboards provide each manager with a custom view of the customer feedback relevant to their specific area of the business. The dashboard data and reports are shared by the managers with the front-line supervisors.

A broader management team receives a weekly email generated from ResponseTek, containing a random sample of 10 compliments and 10 complaints received during that week.

Each Thursday morning, the Operations Managers attend a conference call to review the Company's operational status, customer complaints, media, expected impacts for the week ahead, staffing availability and technology issues.

Complaints and compliments are shared electronically with the manager(s) who has responsibility and accountability for the issue being raised. Options for corrective action are reviewed and implemented by the responsible manager, when necessary. Investigations are also undertaken by this manager and a report is provided to Customer Relations to follow up, respond and resolve the customer's complaint.

Repetitive complaints/issues related to customer service are reviewed by the Manager, Customer Relations and the Director, Customer Care who both work with the Director(s) and relative Vice Presidents to review opportunities for improvement.

A quarterly Customer Feedback and Engagement Report is provided to the BC Ferry Commissioners, published on BC Ferries' website and distributed to BC Ferries senior management.

A quarterly report is also provided to the Commissioner on comments escalated from the Commissioner's office to BCFS or to BCFS Executive.

### **BOARD CORRESPONDENCE PROCEDURES**

Incoming correspondence addressed to the Chair or other members of the Board of BC Ferry Authority ("BCFA") and/or BCFS is received by the Corporate Secretary's Office. The Corporate Secretary reviews all correspondence with the Chair and the President & CEO of BCFS, as well as other members of the Board, as appropriate.

The Corporate Secretary ensures that a response is drafted in a timely manner as there is a seven-day turn-around target on all Board correspondence.

The Corporate Secretary reviews each draft response with the Chair of the Board, the President & CEO, as well as other members of the Board, as appropriate. The Corporate Secretary's Office arranges for signature of the final response, and keeps a copy of the incoming correspondence and the final response in its files. If the draft response has been prepared by Customer Relations, a copy of the final response will also be filed in the correspondence database.

A copy of the final response, together with the incoming correspondence, is provided to other members of the Board by the Corporate Secretary, on the direction of the Board Chair.

Appendix A - **FEEDBACK CHANNELS**

Appendix B - **DETAILED PROCESS DESCRIPTION**

## **APPENDIX A: Feedback Channels**

Customer feedback is received through various channels and entered into ResponseTek by Customer Relations:



## APPENDIX B: Detailed Process Description

<b>CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS PROCESS</b>				
<b>DATA COLLECTED</b>	<b>PROCESS/HANDLING</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>DESTINATION</b>	<b>USE</b>
<p>First Contact: Calls to Customer Service Centre (CSC):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 474,650 in Fiscal 2020</li> </ul> <p>Social Media interactions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16,540 in Fiscal 2020</li> </ul>	<p>Via phone and social media channels</p>	<p>Counted in terms channel: phone, social media complaints.</p> <p>Also monitored through metrics: Average speed of answer, Call Handle time, Abandon Rate, First Call Resolution, Call Quality.</p>	<p>Unresolved complaints are escalated to Customer Relations (CR) and entered into ResponseTek.</p> <p>Feedback is shared with Management via email, phone calls and reports.</p>	<p>Reporting to Management team; process improvement; training opportunities, communication clarification; service plan review/changes, policy review/changes; staff commendations; disciplinary action; KPI reporting.</p>
<p>Complaints/ Commendations</p> <p>10,974 comments received in Fiscal 2020</p>	<p>CSC enters escalated complaints into ResponseTek and Manager of CR assigns priority, review for action/response.</p> <p>CR enters feedback received via phone, email, escalations from terminal/vessel staff, letter, referrals from President &amp; CEO, Executive, Boards of BCFS/BCFA, government, BC Ferry Commissioner.</p> <p>Customers also enter feedback directly into ResponseTek via BC Ferries website.</p> <p>All feedback is acknowledged either by auto-reply from ResponseTek, postcard, email sent by CR staff or by phone, with the exception of overly aggressive or negative feedback and threatening language or customers who don't provide contact details or request no contact. The target for acknowledgement is 7-14 business days depending on the Fiscal Quarter.</p> <p>Further action/investigation may be required following the initial acknowledgement at which point the CR staff will work with internal managers and the customer to work towards a satisfactory resolution.</p>	<p>Individual complaints/commendations</p>	<p>Shared with responsible Manager, Director, Superintendent and/or Vice President responsible (where appropriate).</p> <p>Each manager responsible has access to ResponseTek to monitor feedback for their area.</p>	<p>Measure improvement quarterly.</p> <p>Ongoing Issue Tracking.</p>
		<p>Weekly</p>	<p>Operations Division Conference Call – top complaint areas reported/specific incidents.</p> <p>Report emailed weekly with a sample of complaints/commendations for previous week.</p>	<p>Review key concerns and share learnings with entire Operations group for ongoing improvement.</p>
		<p>Monthly</p>	<p>Director, Customer Care reviews top complaint areas and opportunities for improvement.</p>	<p>Working with vessel and terminal management teams to review/improve process.</p> <p>Review challenges with Executive Directors of Operations for opportunities for improvement.</p>
		<p>Quarterly/ Annually</p>	<p>Review of Reports with Senior Management Team.</p> <p>Report to Commissioner.</p>	<p>Review successes and opportunities for improvement in the following quarter.</p>