

Medical Assured Loading on BC Ferries during COVID-19

Effective July 30, 2020, the Province of British Columbia implemented Ministerial Order M256 relating to Medical Assured Loading

(https://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/mo/mo/2020_m256).

Medical Assured Loading is intended to reduce time at the terminal for those in need of urgent care where an extended wait would cause risk to their health.

Effective July 30, 2020, to access this program, customers will communicate directly with their medical practitioners to obtain an official Medical Assured Loading letter.

Eligibility Criteria and Conditions

To be eligible for Medical Assured Loading on BC Ferries, patients must:

- Be travelling with a completed Travel Assistance Program (TAP) form, including Medical Services Plan confirmation number
- Be travelling to emergency medical care or;
- Be returning from medical treatment where discharge time is unknown and medical condition would make waiting at terminal detrimental to recovery or;
- Other medical conditions as deemed appropriate by the referring medical practitioner

Medical Assured Loading on BC Ferries is not available for general, elective or routine doctor, dentist or specialist appointments.

Travel Requirements

Customers travelling on Medical Assured Loading are required to:

- Arrive at the ticket booth at least 30 minutes in advance of the scheduled sailing time
- Have both the Medical Assured Loading letter from a medical practitioner and the TAP form available to present to the ticket agent or vessel staff

100% reservable routes

Customers travelling on the following routes are required to contact BC Ferries' Customer Service Centre 1-888-BC-FERRY (1-888-223-3779) and an agent will make a reservation on an available sailing.

- Port Hardy – Prince Rupert
- Prince Rupert – Skidegate
- Port Hardy – Bella Coola, including sailings to Bella Bella, Klemtu, Shearwater and Ocean Falls
- Tsawwassen – Southern Gulf Islands

Information for Medical Professionals

Medical practitioners are required to include the following information in their Medical Assured Loading letter:

- Letterhead, including office address and contact information
- Date of issue
- Medical practitioner's signature
- Patient's name (for minors, please include the name of the parent or legal guardian)
- Statement that the individual requires priority loading for medical purposes, and qualifies under the eligibility criteria
- An expiry date. If no expiry date is given, the letter will be valid for one year from the date

of issue

- The route or departure terminals through which the patient will be travelling

Travel Assistance Program (TAP)

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/.../t.../travel-assistance-program-tap-bc>

Ministerial Order M256 will be in place for the duration of the Provincial state of emergency.

Eligible Examples	Non-eligible Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fractures requiring x-ray• Injuries requiring hospital care• Active cancer treatment• Chemo/radiotherapy treatments• Dialysis• Pneumonia• Abdominal pain requiring hospital care• Returning from major surgery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regular travel• General medical appointments• Specialist appointments• Follow-up appointments• Non-urgent dental appointments• Routine exams• Specialty services (lab tests, radiology, immunizations, physiotherapy)

Many thanks to Toby Wadsworth, SGI Ferry Advisory Committee Member from Saturna for putting together this explanation and sharing this information.